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THE INDEPENDENT

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by Andrew Graham-Dixon

After the hype, the scientists' verdict: CJD to kill hundreds

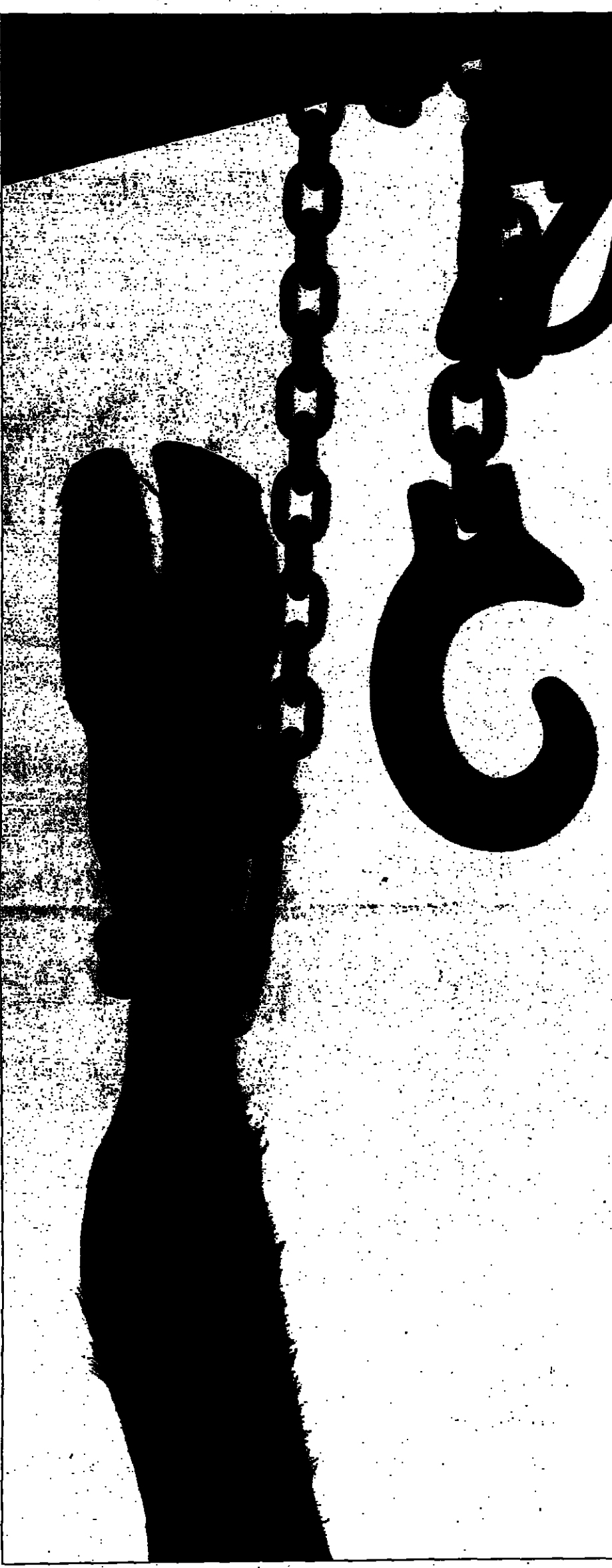
Charles Arthur Science Editor

EXCLUSIVE

Government scientists are predicting that hundreds of Britons will die every year from CJD caused by eating BSE-infected food - with the peak occurring in about seven years' time. People who ate a lot of hamburgers in the late Eighties are believed to be most at risk, *The Independent* can reveal. The predicted death-toll is much lower than forecast by some scientists when the possibility of a link between Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease and "mad cow disease" was first suggested a year ago. But it is also far worse than the reassuring words from politicians and officials in the decade since BSE was first identified. The new estimates are contained in a paper submitted by members of the CJD Surveillance Unit in Edinburgh to the *Lancet* medical journal for publication. It contains new calculations by them based on the 14 "new variant" cases of the brain disorder (CJD) recorded so far in the UK. Dr James Ironside, one of the co-authors, said yesterday: "Thankfully, this is not the doomsday scenario that some have predicted, where the British population is decimated. That doesn't seem to be on the cards. It looks as though the total number of cases over the whole course of the disease will be in the hundreds, rather than thousands. But the human toll will be high. The "new variant" CJD has mostly affected people aged under 40, including a number of teenagers. It is incurable, and the symptoms, which take two years to develop, include de-

pression and falling coordination, followed by dementia and coma leading to death. People who were on tight budgets in the 1980s are particularly at risk, as they would have been more dependent on cheap foodstuffs - especially hamburgers and meals containing "mechanically recovered meat", made by stripping the heads and spines of cattle. No one yet knows whether a single infected hamburger could carry a fatal dose. Scientists are divided on the issue. But all agree that eating more infected food would make you more likely to develop the disease. The scientists' new calculation destroys forever the Government's assertion, repeated since BSE's identification in 1986 until last March, that BSE posed "no risk to human health". It could also have political repercussions in the EC if the number of "variant" CJD cases keeps rising after the European ban on British beef is lifted. However, such a rise in the number of British victims is inevitable because of the disease's long incubation period - estimated to be 15 years on average. The Edinburgh team's calculations suggest that the number of cases, which has doubled in each of the past two years, will rise gradually and reach a peak in 2003. The figure of 15 years is comparable to the time for the disease to show up when people have accidentally eaten or been injected with CJD infected material, as occurred in the UK when people were given human growth hormone injection.

tions. The team also assumes that the risk of eating BSE-infected food peaked around 1988 and 1989, when the number of cattle incubating BSE but showing symptoms of it was highest, and the most infective parts of cattle - such as the brain and spinal cord - were still being used in human food. An independent team at Oxford University calculated in September that 446,000 BSE-infected cattle were used for human food before the highly infective materials were banned from food at the end of 1989. The 14 victims so far seem to be an "unlucky few" who became ill more quickly than usual, said Dr Ironside. Dietary studies suggest that they ate more hamburgers than people who have died of "normal" CJD. However, Dr Ironside said this could simply be a cultural, rather than causative difference - as the normal form of CJD usually only affects people aged over 60. "The question is still: why these 14?" he added. The Department of Health said yesterday, "We think it is too early to make any predictions at this stage, and we have not seen the paper. We await its publication." Sandra Galloway, who set up the CJD Victims Support Group, said "The Government has finally recognised us, and recently gave us £50,000 to do our work. It looks as if, if this happens, we're going to need all the help available." The biggest problem, she said, would be to provide the nursing care that CJD patients would require. "The new form often hits the young, and it is very hard to get them into a nursing home," she said. "The families will need support."



MPs sullen as Clarke buys time

Colin Brown Chief Political Correspondent

Tory backbenchers were in sullen mood last night awaiting today's Budget package by the Chancellor after Kenneth Clarke bought them off with assurances that he will take no binding decisions on a single European currency before the Dublin summit in December. Mr Clarke bought time, but the row with the Euro-sceptics was still simmering after his unprecedented statement to the House to prevent their anger on Europe overshadowing today's package of tax cuts and spending increases for health, schools and police which are intended to be the springboard for the Tory election campaign. The Prime Minister who will chair a meeting of the Cabinet to hear the Budget this morning was not in the chamber to lend his support to Mr Clarke but the Tory back bench was in subdued mood, and the threatened mauling of the Chancellor never materialised. Mr Clarke gave a clear signal that he wanted to make the statement or face a debate late last week, but was stopped from doing so by the Prime Minister. Mr Major met the "men in grey suits", the leaders of the 1922 Committee of Tory MPs before the Chancellor made his statement to the packed House. Sir Marcus Fox, chairman of the 1922 Committee, told the Prime Minister that there had been unrest among backbenchers at the refusal of the Government to concede a full debate on the European proposals for a stability pact, which they feared could lead to Britain being forced to accept economic discipline from Brussels even if it remained outside a single European currency. Mr Major assured the 1922 Committee leaders their fears were ill-founded, and that Britain's opt-out from the single currency will not be com-

promised. One senior Tory said they had looked over the brink, and had pulled back. They backed off after assurances by the Chancellor that he will enter a parliamentary "scrutiny reserve" when he goes to the European finance ministers' meeting on Monday. The backbenchers were also guaranteed there would be an extended Commons debate before the Dublin summit, although it is likely to be "on the adjournment", avoiding a damaging split on the vote. Labour leaders last night conceded that "Ken has got away with it", and there seems little likelihood of a confidence motion to bring the Government down before the New Year, although the Government's majority could be wiped out with a by-election in Labour-held Barnsley East. The Chancellor's assurance to John Redwood, seen as a champion of the Euro-sceptics, was the turning point. Mr Clarke told Mr Redwood that he would seek to amend the documents at the Econfin meeting on Monday to underline Britain's parliamentary "scrutiny reserve". They will be checking to ensure the Chancellor fulfils his promises. The Tory Euro-sceptics remained unmoved by the Chancellor's commitment to keep open the option of a single currency right through to the election. Although the body of the Tory MPs appears opposed to entering the single currency, at least in the first wave, Mr Clarke remains the obstacle to a more Euro-sceptic policy. He was supported on the front bench by his staunchest ally, Michael Heseltine, the deputy Prime Minister, making Mr Major's absence more obvious. Downing Street said it was because the meeting with the backbenchers ran past 3.30pm, when the Chancellor's statement began, but Sir Marcus was in the chamber. Donald MacIntyre, page 19

QUICKLY

Blasphemy ruling
Free speech activists, humanists and lawyers united in fury after the European Court of Human rights ruled that the ancient law of blasphemy does not infringe the right to freedom of expression. Page 7

Eurotunnel bill
Eurotunnel could face a bill of up to £165m if, as the company's senior executives now fear, last week's fire in the Channel Tunnel prevents it from resuming a full service for at least three months. Page 20

IRA extradition
German police investigating an IRA mortar bomb attack on a British army base in Germany last summer applied for the extradition from Northern Ireland of Róisín McAisley, 25, daughter of the former nationalist MP Bernadette McAisley. Page 2

Player suspended
Jay Notley, 18, the Charlton midfielder, has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association and suspended after testing positive for a cocktail of drugs including cocaine, cannabis, and Ecstasy. Page 28

Bizarre case of the charter plane that could not turn left

Christian Wolmar

Airtours, Britain's second-largest tour operator, misled safety authorities over an emergency on an aircraft carrying almost 250 holidaymakers, when the pilot could not turn properly to the left during a four-hour flight. Airtours has admitted to the *Independent* that an incident report sent to the Civil Aviation Authority was inaccurate because it implied the pilot had regained control over the aircraft, which had a maintenance worker's torch jammed in critical controls inside the wing. The plane, on a holiday flight from the Canaries last year to East Midlands airport, was diverted and made an emergency landing at Manchester. When the crew several times tried to correct the problem by pushing hard against the controls to un-

jam the mechanism, the plane lurched in a 60-degree bank. Yet the mandatory occurrence report (MOR) which Airtours filed says the pilots managed to break through the jammed equipment so that it did not restrict handling of the aircraft. If an accurate report had been made, the Air Accident Investigation Branch would probably have made a full investigation and publicised its findings. The near-disaster received no publicity and other airlines were not warned that one of the procedures employed by the crew, in accordance with Boeing's flight-operations manual, put the aircraft at risk of crashing. Last night a spokesman for the Civil Aviation Authority said it would be contacting Airtours over the inaccuracy. The company did not publicise the incident in its internal newsletter, which is standard practice


among airlines. When the Boeing 757 flight AIFH 838, flying from Fuerteventura to East Midlands and Newcastle on 13 December landed at Manchester, it was discovered that a torch left by an engineer employed by Monarch was blocking controls to the right aileron. The aileron, a wing flap, could not move downwards, which prevented the plane making a left-hand turn. In the MOR filed by the company to the CAA, it says the plane landed "with QRH (quick-reference handbook) action achieving aileron break-out", implying that efforts of the crew disconnected the faulty aileron, allowing them to steer using other flaps. In fact, this never occurred and the captain had great difficulty in bringing the aircraft down in windy conditions. Colin Penny, Airtours Di-


rector of Flight Operations, admits the MOR was wrong, and initially said this was a result of information given by the captain, Ray Cockerton. However, after the *Independent* told the company it had seen Captain Cockerton's report, Penny said the report was based "on information supplied by the engineering department." When the *Independent* first contacted Airtours over the incident, its press officer, Sean Robinson, said there was "no emergency on the ground, only in the air," and that the aircraft could have landed in any UK airport but went to Manchester "because it is our maintenance base". In fact, the pilot announced a full emergency and was unable to land elsewhere because of wind conditions and runway position. Pilot's nightmare, page 3

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significant shorts

Church's gay feud erupts at Synod

The Church of England's bitter feud over homosexuality led yesterday to the pillorying of its communications director, the Rev Eric Shegog. Last month, Mr Shegog made a formal protest to the BBC and demanded an apology after Radio 4's "Thought for the Day" broadcast an attack on the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement's 20th anniversary service by Anne Atkins, an evangelical actress. When the Church of England's General Synod opened its meeting in Church House yesterday, an unprecedented 14 questions had been tabled attacking his behaviour. Members were applauded as they asked why he had made a protest in the name of the whole church against a broadcast which reiterated the synod's official position. **Andrew Brown**

Magistrate's wife must stay in jail

A woman jailed for trying to protect her husband from a drink-driving charge had her sentence cut after the Court of Appeal was told that she lived in fear of her domineering partner. But the judges dismissed a plea for her immediate release - instead reducing to six months a nine-month sentence imposed at Leeds Crown Court for perjury and attempting to pervert the course of justice. Anne Bosomworth, 38, claimed to have been driving the couple's Range Rover, when it crashed into a wall, but it was her husband, John, a magistrate, who had been at the wheel. He was jailed for 15 months.

London trams on way back

Trams will be running again in London by the end of the century in a £200m deal finalised yesterday. Work can now start on the 17-mile Croydon Tramlink which will link Croydon with Wimbledon, Beckenham and New Addington. The project is being taken forward under the Government's Private Finance Initiative, and is supported by a Department of Transport grant of £125m.

Bull bars set to be banned

A ban on bull bars, fitted to the front of cars and jeeps, may be on the way, the Government indicated yesterday. Transport Minister John Birt told the Commons at question time: "I want to see aggressive bull bars banned." Replying to Labour's Paul Flynn (Newport W) whose backbench Bill to outlaw metal bull bars failed earlier this year, Mr Birt said good progress was being made in drawing-up a European Commission directive. "We are making good progress on that. Britain is leading the way on it and I hope that before too long we will achieve what you and I want."

Eurotunnel safety row

Eurotunnel is to be challenged at an industrial tribunal over the dismissal of 12 security staff laid off just five days after the Channel Tunnel fire. It was revealed yesterday. The Transport union said it was supporting the challenge and called on Eurotunnel to reinstate the workers. "When the tunnel fully reopens, safety and security will clearly be a matter of great public concern," said T&G officer Mike Eede. "If Eurotunnel has dismissed their own specialist security staff, where are the trained security workers to come from?" Eurotunnel said the dismissals were part of an overall re-organisation and would not compromise safety.

United drawn into kit row

Manchester United were yesterday drawn into the Christmas kit controversy when they confirmed that they will be unveiling their third new strip in six months in January. It will upset some parents still reeling from the news that the England Euro 96 shirts they have bought as festive presents for their children will be obsolete in the new year. But a club spokesman said: "Supporters who buy our kits know what the lifespan is."

Christmas speech spoof

A send-up by Rory Bremner of the Princess of Wales making a Christmas speech will be broadcast by Channel 4 at the same time as the Queen's speech on Christmas Day. But the channel denied it would distress the princess. "I am sure if you asked her what she thought of Rory Bremner's characterisation, she would probably say she falls about laughing," said the controller of arts and entertainment, Stuart

Smooth Ken silences the beastly snarls



'One by one the Europhobic big cats slunk off, puzzled, to work out why they had n't eaten'

Yesterday, yet another epic failed to go according to script. The first part of the long-awaited Ken Trilogy (part two is today, part three yet to be announced) was supposed to feature *Colosseum Ken, the Man of Reason* being ripped apart by the wild beasts of Europhobia. In the *Return of Ken*, his reputation is restored and he is sewn together again after a crowd-pleasing budget, before - in *Ken III (Europe Strikes Back)* - he is once more torn to shreds. It didn't happen. At the end the Chancellor stood in the middle of the arena, surrounded by small pieces of fur and occasional teeth, almost unscathed. But quite why Ken survived his ordeal is something of a mystery. The omens were not that

good. High in the public gallery Sir James Goldsmith, boss of Forza Britannia, had come to give Mr Clarke the thumbs down at the appropriate point. Bronzed, shiny and perpetually smiling, Sir James looked like a happy hazelnut, high in a happy tree. On the 10th second bench, coiled up next to the gently buzzing Jacques Arnold (Con, Gravesham), was the sinuous form of John Redwood, quietly priming his poison sacs. Indeed, so desperate was Ken's plight thought to be, that his staunchest supporter - rarely seen in the Chamber - made an appearance and loudly heard-throughout the Chancellor's statement. But that's enough about Roy Hattersley. All along the Opposition

front bench - like the patricians at the slaughter - sat the intense young men who will benefit most from a change of government. Messrs Mandelson, O'Brien, Milburn and Darling were contemplating the imperial purple, though inwardly weeping for a man with whom they have very few disagreements. Even Gordon Brown, his dark Heathcliffian scowl firmly attached as he prepared to launch himself at the tender parts of his opponent, seemed to take little pleasure in the tragedy about to unfold. It didn't happen. Mr Brown made a perfectly reasonable and opportunistic assault on the confusion at the heart of government policy, the reluctance of ministers to countenance a debate over

Europe and the seeming contradictions in what had been said in recent days. But by then Ken had already embarked upon his "soothe and bemuse" strategy. This consists of adopting his only sane-man-in-a-ward-of-mutters voice (the kind of tones that psychiatric nurses perfect after about 30 years), allied to a level of detail about meetings, documents, conferences, something called Ecofin (which I had always thought was a submarine detection system) and negotiations, that left almost everyone feeling inadequate. From the animal pens behind the Chancellor the early snarls and muted growls gradually died away, leaving only John Redwood in full and dissenting command of the arguments being



Hot metal: Part of a collection of type artifacts spanning 500 years that have been bought with a £495,000 grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund for the Type Museum, which is to be housed in refurbished buildings in Brixton, south London. Photograph: Andrew Burman

Clarke accuses Kinnock of leaking Treasury brief

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Britain's European commissioner, Neil Kinnock, the former Labour leader, was implicated yesterday by Kenneth Clarke in the leaking of a confidential

briefing note from the Treasury on European economic and monetary union which forced the Chancellor to make his statement to the Commons.

Mr Clarke accused Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, of leaking the papers to the *Sunday Times*, an allegation which Mr Brown failed to deny. But the Chancellor pointed the finger at Mr Kinnock, Britain's second European commissioner, as the culprit for the leaking of the document. The note said "the current proposals will not be acceptable to Parliament". It also made it clear the Chancellor was concerned about the stability pact proposed by the Germans for imposing penalties on countries which failed to keep to the discipline of the Emu.

He said he had personally taken the decision to send the confidential papers to both Mr Kinnock and Britain's senior commissioner, Sir Leon Brittan, the former Tory Cabinet minister. Mr Clarke told MPs Sir Leon appeared to be "in the clear" leaving open the impression that Mr Kinnock or his office were to blame.

The Chancellor used the leaking of the documents to deflect attention away from the real purpose of his statement, which was to lance the boil of the Tory backbench anger over Europe before it spilled into the Budget. Mr Clarke said it was the published reporting of the documents which had forced him to make his statement. Labour MPs were astonished at the Chancellor's readiness to

implicate one of Britain's most senior figures in Europe in his absence. It could lead to strained relations between the Government and Mr Kinnock's office.

Mr Clarke said he would be seeking assurances from Mr Kinnock about the documents. It was suggested by the former Cabinet minister, David Hunt, a pro-European ally of Mr Clarke's, who said he should send no more documents to Mr Kinnock's office "until he has received a satisfactory explanation of what went wrong".

Mr Clarke said he had no means of knowing where the published documents came from but he told MPs copies were sent to both of Britain's commissioners.

"I myself took the decision

whether or not to send it to one commissioner or both British commissioners. I decided the national interest required me to send it to both commissioners personally and in confidence to them and their chefs de cabinet. I have now idea how it reached the outside."

But Mr Clarke said "Sir Leon Brittan is probably in the clear. I shall certainly consider what briefing I put forward in the future."

The note - one of four documents which were leaked - was prepared at the request of Sir Leon and Mr Kinnock to brief them on British views. It was issued by the Treasury in confidence but Mr Clarke said it was released yesterday, because Mr Brown had "seen fit to break that confidence".

Delay in monetary union would be 'Paradise lost', claims Santer

Katherine Butler
Brussels

As the debate on the single currency intensified, Jacques Santer, the European Commission President warned that the plan is irreversible.

"It is now possible to state with the greatest amount of confidence that the project has become irreversible. The euro will see the light of day on the first of January 1999". In a speech delivered last night in Dublin, he said any delay in monetary union would be "paradise lost". Implicitly directing his criticism at Britain's Euro-sceptics, Mr Santer said critics of EMU should stop fighting "ghosts" which in reality posed no threat. Dismissing the latest scare story, Mr Santer denied that people in one participating state would end up paying for pensions of citizens in others. Monetary union would prevent pension-related debt from arising, he said, because single currency countries would follow sound budgetary policies. The guarantee of that would be the proposed budget stability pact with fines for failure to observe fiscal rectitude. Governments were already

taking steps to deal with the risk of unfunded pensions which might arise with the ageing of Europe's population, for example by increasing the pension age. Mr Santer said the summit of EU leaders in Dublin next month would agree on a new currency grid linking members of the euro-zone with those economies which remain outside. The new system would be based on strengthened economic convergence.

It was already agreed that member states not entering the one-money zone from day one would submit plans demonstrating how they intend-

ed to achieve the high degree of convergence necessary for membership.

The Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, refused to accept last night that a single currency is irreversible. "History will decide whether he [Mr Santer] is right or wrong. There is not much point in expressing opinions on what may or may not happen. EMU depends on the convergence criteria being met. I don't know if they will be met".

Speaking in Brussels, he insisted the stability pact would not tie Britain into an economic or political straitjacket dictated by Brussels or Frankfurt.

Police search for bomb suspect

David McKillick
Ireland Correspondent

A daughter of former nationalist MP Bernadette McAisley is being sought by German police investigating an IRA mortar bomb attack on a British army base in Germany last summer.

The German authorities yesterday applied for the extradition of 25-year-old Roisin McAisley in connection with the attack in Osnabruck in June. The German Federal Prosecutor said she faced charges of attempted murder and possession of explosives.

It emerged yesterday that she has been in RUC custody in Belfast since last Wednesday, when she was arrested at her parents' home in Coalisland, Co Tyrone. The home was searched yesterday, but police sources later said nothing was found or taken from the house during the search.

No one was injured in the Osnabruck attack though several devices were fired into the base and one landed close to a fuel store. The German authorities later named two men, one of them from Northern Ireland and another a former British soldier, whom they wished to question in connection with the incident.

Bernadette McAisley yesterday said her daughter had never been to Germany. She said she was worried and that neither her daughter nor her lawyer had been told of any extradition warrant. "Neither Roisin nor her lawyer have been presented with any information about the existence of the warrant. I don't know what the position is until I know the warrant exists."

Mrs McAisley shot to prominence in the late 1960s when, as a student civil rights activist, she was elected to Westminster as the youngest-ever woman MP. She made a huge public impact, being characterised variously as a "firebrand" and "a mini-skirted Castro".

Her chequered career since then included a short jail term for rioting, a physical attack on the late Reginald Maudling in the Commons following "Bloody Sunday", and the loss of her seat in 1974. She and her husband miraculously escaped death when they were repeatedly shot by loyalist gunmen at their home in 1981.

In the years since then she has not aligned herself with any major political grouping though she has been active in various campaigns on behalf of republican prisoners. She campaigned against the extradition of republican suspects from Ireland to Britain.

Two years ago, she received publicity when she carried the coffin and gave the oration at the funeral of Dominic McGlinchey, the murdered one-time leader of the Irish National Liberation Army.

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Middle-aged spread? It's in the genes

Glenda Cooper

Genes, rather than bad diet or lack of exercise, are largely to blame for excess fat in middle-aged women, new research has found.

A study of 350 twins, at Guy's and St Thomas's hospitals in London, has raised hopes of finding a human "obesity gene" and developing new slimming treatments to tackle weight-related problems like heart disease and cancer.

Using the latest "body-scan" technology, researchers found that 60 per cent of body fat in women over 50 is caused by their genetic make-up. Earlier studies suggested the figure was closer to 10 per cent. The survey, using identical and non-identical twins, also indicates that genes may determine where on the body each individual puts on weight.

"This is important because it is 'central obesity' [when extra fat is carried around the waist] which increases the risk

of heart disease and diabetes rather than the total amount of fat," said Dr Tim Spector, head of the Twin Research Unit. "If a woman puts on fat round the buttocks and thighs, it is generally a good place to have it, in medical terms."

The research also suggests that doing more exercise is a more effective way of getting rid of fat than going on a healthier diet, and that women on hormone replacement therapy (HRT) tend to have less body fat.

"Understanding the factors which regulate the store of body fat will hopefully lead to effective therapies to try and prevent obesity and its associated health problems," said Dr Spector. "If we can find the genes involved, then we should be able to target the diet and exercise regime which is most appropriate."

He appealed for any twins - whether identical or non-identical - willing to help with the research, to contact his team on 0990 770099.

1550 من الاصل

Time to put the stars back in the sky

Ministers study ways to cleanse the night of pollution from lighting

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

Light from a million suns in the heart of our galaxy, the Milky Way, takes 100,000 years to reach us. But in the last few millionths of a second before it hits the earth's surface, it runs into some very heavy competition.

Across much of Britain and the developed world, light pollution is putting out the stars with a bright but somehow murky orange night time glow which spreads far beyond our towns and cities.

Less than a century ago most Britons had a completely different impression of what night meant and looked like. Whenever it wasn't cloudy they could gaze at a sky teeming with stars and planets; only the full moon could obliterate the crowded heavens.

Today, from suburban streets and gardens, you may hope to see only a couple of dozen of the most garish stars and planets penetrating the man-made glow. This is caused by light beaming upwards, then being scattered as its hits microscopic particles which are solid or made of water. Mostly these specks are natural but some are caused by pollution.

The Milky Way is a rare sight for today's urban children - something to be seen only on holidays deep in the countryside. And robins are often seen singing under streetlights in winter, defending their territories beneath a false sun.

Yesterday the Government held a conference on light pollution. John Gummer, the Secretary of State for the Environment admitted there was a real environmental problem at issue, and promised a review of laws and policies to see if the harm could be reduced.

"The presumption is in favour of lighting," he said. "In many aspects this is entirely justifiable for a number of priority reasons, safety and security being top of the list."

But, he said, it was time to ask basic questions - about whether further lighting schemes were necessary, achieved its objectives and was the minimum needed.

David Crawford, an astronomer from Arizona's Kit Peak National Observatory - one of America's biggest optical telescopes - was at the London conference. He said the skyglow from a big conurbation could spread 60 miles into the countryside.

Speakers from the British Astronomical Association and the Council for the Protection of Rural England said the Government could make a real difference by altering the official guidance which local councils use in deciding to grant planning permission for new development.

When they decide whether to reject a scheme on the grounds that it is unnecessarily lit or overlit, it is this guidance which they rely on - and which guards them against the developer mounting an appeal against the rejection.

They said the text which covers light is sparse, scrappy and unclear. It was high time these "Planning Policy Guidance" documents were revised to give councils a clear mandate to reject schemes with intrusive, inefficient lighting.

Dr John Mason, who heads the astronomical association's Dark Skies campaign, said security lighting of homes and commercial premises, floodlighting of sports grounds and decorative floodlighting of heritage buildings were becoming major sky pollutants. This summer *The Independent* revealed that a string of millennium projects seeking National Lottery backing relied on extensive floodlighting.

Sodium street lighting being now being installed was of a much better design which threw very little light upwards. But it would be at least two decades before less efficient, more polluting designs were replaced across the country. Today nearly a third of Britain's 6,500 mile network of trunk roads and motorways is lit.



Eventide views are increasingly spoilt by artificial lighting from factories, sports grounds and even national heritage sites

Floodlit golf driving ranges which have been springing up in the countryside around Britain have been a particular menace, he added. Scores of people living near them have objected.

But Assistant Chief Constable Richard Childs, who heads the Home Office's Crime Prevention Agency, told the conference that lighting undoubtedly had a part to play in fighting crime. Some studies had indicated that it did actually deter criminals, and it certainly made vulnerable people feel safer.

There are security lighting designs which are well shaded and efficient, casting no rays upwards, he added. Kate Painter, of Cambridge University's Institute of Criminology, told delegates about 'the Dudley Project'. High pressure sodium lighting was installed a few years ago in an estate in the West Midlands town, and both crime and the fear of crime fell, compared to a similar but unlit estate.

So, can we have our cake and eat it - more and more light, but with designs which cut sky glow? The answer seems to be yes, but only up to a point.

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'The controls jumped out of his hand at 4,000 feet. It was every pilot's nightmare'

Christian Wolmar

It was the moment every pilot dreads. The controls on Flight AIH 838 - a Boeing 757 carrying 241 passengers and crew - became jammed soon after take-off from Farnborough in stormy conditions, bound for East Midlands and Newcastle. Unknown to the flight crew, Captain Ray Cockerton and first officer Andrew Redknapp, a torch had been left in the right-hand wing. During take-off, which, unusually, was at full power due to the poor conditions, the torch lodged in the aileron, the flap which is used to turn the plane.

It had been left there by an engineer at Luton the day before and had not caused any problem in three previous flights.

Mr Redknapp was flying the aircraft on auto-pilot at around 4,000 feet, soon after take-off, when he tried to turn left. The controls jumped out of the auto-pilot mode. After a second failed attempt, Captain Cockerton took over the controls with the auto-pilot disengaged.

"Having controls which don't respond is the classic pilot's nightmare," he said. He used the rudder, which is not normally operated during flights, to reach the right heading, get away from the mountains and over the sea.

The two flight crew then tried to find out what was wrong. Mr Redknapp went into the cabin but could see nothing amiss on the wings.

They went through the check list and contacted the Monarch engineers who had serviced the plane at Luton. The emergency check-list procedure requires both pilots to push as hard as possible to free the controls. When they did, the plane went into a violent lurch, banking at 60 degrees.

Captain Cockerton considered his options but bearing in mind the bad weather in the



Ray Cockerton: "The plane got to full throttle, then things went wrong"

Photograph: Heidi Maxmilling/AGS

Canaries, which made any landing impossible, decided to press on to the UK.

"At this stage, I thought we had a 50 per cent chance of getting down safely," Captain Cockerton said.

He began to consider which airport to land in Britain and declared a full emergency. He chose Manchester because the direction of the runway and the wind was most appropriate to his situation and wind direction and he knew that the airport had good emergency services.

Over the Welsh hills, he and his first officer both once more tried to dislodge the blockage but the plane again lurched violently.

The two thought that the problem lay with a jammed aileron at the end of the right wing but had no idea what had caused it. While the six cabin crew had been informed, they did not tell passengers to avoid causing panic.

Captain Cockerton managed to bring the plane in at a small angle to the runway to allow for

the wind but the aileron was still jammed at touchdown.

However, the report produced by the company for the Civil Aviation Authority, suggests that emergency action had solved the problem, resulting in a normal manual landing: "I don't think the report conveys the gravity of the situation," he said.

After landing, according to the CAA's report, "the crew demonstrated the problem, at which point a large metal torch was forced through the wing below the Right Hand aileron".

The passengers were never told about what had caused the incident, but 30 refused to take the plane provided by Airtours to take them back to East Midlands and travelled by land.

At his home in the east Midlands, Captain Cockerton wrote a four-page report and was told by the company that there would be a debriefing session with all the crew. This never materialised.

Apart from a thank you letter from Airtours managers, the incident was barely mentioned again and within a week he was back on duty.

Captain Cockerton said that was a mistake: "I felt occasionally tearful but otherwise I was apparently fine for three or four months, then I started getting flashbacks, insomnia and irritability."

Eventually, in June, he felt that his mental state warranted reporting sick and he sought medical advice. He was diagnosed as suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome and referred to a specialist for successful counselling sessions. Captain Cockerton resigned a few days later and now flies for another major airline.

As for the engineer who left the torch, he put up a big notice in his mess at Luton asking if anyone had seen his torch. Last night, Monarch refused to comment on whether he was disciplined.



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Greene papers for sale: dossier on a perfect spy

Marianne Macdonald
Arts Correspondent

The most important private archive of works relating to the author Graham Greene is to go up for auction in what will be one of the biggest literary sales of this year.

Expected to raise more than £250,000, the sale encompasses the novelist's entire career, from contributions to his school magazine in 1922 to the unfinished novel he gave away weeks before his death in 1991.

Formed by the American real-estate dealer, Clinton Ives Smullyan Jr, the archive is of special interest because it covers so many aspects of Greene's life: from his miserable school-days as the headmaster's son at Beckenhamstead, to his time at Oxford - where he got a taste for Russian Roulette - and his work as a spy for MI6 in the Second World War.

He began spying under the command of the double agent

Kim Philby, who later defected to the Soviet Union. Greene was put in charge of the writer and television personality Malcolm Muggeridge.

His biographer Norman Sherry observed: "By nature he was the perfect spy: he was an intensely secretive man."

The theme of betrayal and es-

pionage, beginning with his early betrayal of a schoolmate to his father, and reinforced by the work for MI6, fascinated Greene, who was frequently unfaithful to his wife Vivien before, without warning, he left her. Included in the sale at Sotheby's on 16 December is Greene's annotated copy of Andrew

Boyle's *The Climate of Treason* (which is expected to fetch up to £1,500). Greene's notes reveal his opposition to the view of Philby as an amoral traitor.

At one point the book quotes Muggeridge as saying that Philby admired Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister, and wanted to work for him. "Non-

sense," Greene wrote crossly in the margin. "Typical of MM."

Later, Boyle wrote of the "treacherous lengths to which the Soviet Union and its hidden accomplices [are] prepared to go". "How can one apply morality in these realms?" Greenescribbled.

As a student at Oxford, the novelist was briefly a member of the British Communist Party, which caused him problems getting US visas and resulted in the FBI opening a file on him.

While writing an article for *The Spectator*, Greene applied for the release of their documents under the Freedom of Information Act. He was sent a heavily censored set of photocopies which are estimated to fetch up to £4,500.

Another important lot is Greene's proof copy of the novel many consider his masterpiece, *The End of the Affair*. Estimated at up to £9,000, it contains both Greene's corrections - in blue ink - and those of Evelyn Waugh, in red. Greene asked his fellow writer for comments when he realised the sensation that his story about a wartime love affair might cause.

The copy reveals that Waugh, whose writing was also bound up with Catholicism, was cautious about some of Greene's allusions. He queries a number of passages including the comparison of a man to an "abortion".

A series of letters from Greene to his great protégé, the novelist R K Narayan is also up for sale, as is Greene's proof copy of *The Heart of the Matter* - littered with his corrections - and his annotated script of *The Third Man*, the film which starred Orson Welles.

"One of the nicest things about the sale," said Peter Selley, the specialist in charge of the auction, "is that it includes books with inscriptions from Graham to the great love of his life, to Catherine Walston, his first mistress, Dorothy Glover - one of which says 'from Graham Greene the bastard' - and to his wife, Vivien, who brought up their children."



In the shadows: The author Graham Greene, who lived a life of intrigue and espionage, and whose private papers come up for auction at Sotheby's on 16 December

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Black students on the end of school expulsions

Fran Abrams
Education Correspondent

Pupils excluded from schools for bad behaviour are costing the state £24m each year, according to a report published yesterday.

Local authorities pay £14m each year for administration and support, while social services pay £3m for support. In addition, one-quarter of out-of-school pupils get into trouble with the police, costing around £7m a year.

Last week Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, announced that 11,000 pupils were permanently excluded from schools in the 1994-95 academic year. Dr Carl Parsons, who carried out the research released yesterday by the Commission for Racial Equality, believes the figure is now even higher.

Although the cost of looking after excluded pupils is far higher than for those who stay in school, they receive an average

of only half a day's teaching per week. Only 15 per cent ever find their way back into mainstream schools. Some go to pupil referral units, some receive home tuition and others simply drop out of the education system altogether.

The cost of an excluded pupil is far higher, but they receive only half a day's teaching a week

One pupil in one of the six local authorities visited by a team from Christchurch College in Canterbury, Kent, cost social services £39,000 in a single year, including a place at a residential school, and cost the criminal justice system a further £22,000.

The commission is concerned

about the issue because black boys are six times more likely to be excluded from school than their white classmates. Yesterday its chairman, Herman Ouseley, called for changes in the law which would curb a recent rapid rise in exclusions.

Proposals in the Government's latest Education Bill which would allow schools temporarily to exclude pupils for up to 45 days in a year should be dropped, he said, and appeals panels should be forced to consider the cost of exclusion.

The report, *Exclusion from School: The Public Cost*, also gives details of the social costs of removing a child from school. Researchers who interviewed 27 parents of excluded pupils reported that they suffered from stress, worry about how to cope with their child during the day and fears about the disruption of their education. In the long term, family strains could lead to divorce or to the child being taken into care.

Mr Ouseley accused schools of using exclusion in a "trigger-happy" way.

"People are using exclusion as a first option rather than as a last option. You have to bear in mind the home cost, the damage to family, the stress to other agencies such as criminal justice and social services," he said.

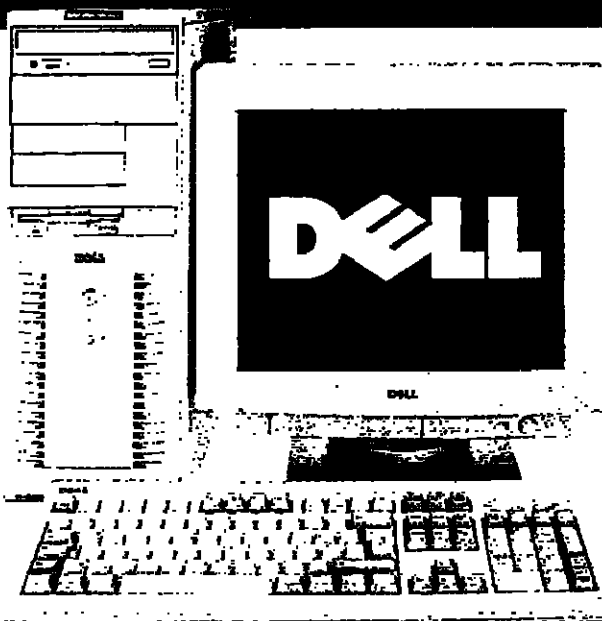
His remarks drew an angry reaction from the teachers' union which has been to the forefront of several high-profile campaigns for more exclusions of disruptive pupils. Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, said the costs of disruption to other children's education if these pupils were kept in school were incalculable. Research to be published soon by his union would show that between 80 and 85 per cent of excluded pupils were already in trouble with the police, he added.

"This is rubbish. I think schools tolerate far too much. If we were exclusion-happy there would be hundreds of thousands of kids chucked out every year," he said.

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Colin Stagg contemplates the truth

Man cleared of Rachel Nickell murder submits to trial by television. Louise Jury reports

Colin Stagg has passed a lie detector test in which he denied the brutal murder of young mother Rachel Nickell.

But television programme-makers who arranged the test claimed he changed his mind about further questioning under the influence of a "truth drug" and resisted hypnosis after learning that both were more reliable tests of honesty.

Mr Stagg, 33, agreed to meet the television journalist Roger Cook for the first public assessment of his defence to the charge of Ms Nickell's murder in 1992 on Wimbledon Common, London.

The defence was never heard in court after the judge dismissed the case against him. The same case cannot be brought again.

But in *The Cook Report*, to be broadcast tonight, Mr Stagg claimed he would welcome civil action against him.

"If the Nickell family was convinced I was innocent, that would make me more at ease with my life."

"I would like to meet the family and look them straight in the eye and tell them plainly I'm not guilty of this murder," he said.

Mr Cook, however, appeared sceptical about some of Mr Stagg's responses, including his refusal to take the "truth drug" - a mixture of benzodiazepines or sedatives - on medical grounds.

Mr Stagg said he feared the long-term effects of having such chemicals in his body.

Mr Cook concluded: "Stagg gave us his full co-operation for an investigation into his side of the story and his legal team gave us complete access to his defence case. [But] there are still inconsistencies and questions unanswered."

Mr Stagg faced 60 questions in the polygraph lie-detector test. The test, which is not permitted as evidence in British courts, was administered by Jeremy Barrett, who categorically concluded that Mr Stagg did not kill Ms Nickell.

However, in at least one instance, the programme-makers claim Mr Stagg gave an answer which contradicted his response in a previous polygraph test which he also passed.

Mr Cook then questioned similarities between Mr Stagg's sexual fantasies - as described in letters to an undercover policeman known as Lizzie James - and the attack on Ms Nickell.

In his letters, Mr Stagg described sex with strangers, nakedness on Wimbledon Common, the use of knives and dripping blood. But he claimed another man with the same fantasies must have been responsible for the attack.



Face to face: Roger Cook (left) with Colin Stagg who says he would welcome civil action against him as an opportunity to dispel lingering doubts about the unsolved murder of Rachel Nickell (below right), who died in a frenzied attack witnessed by her young son

He said: "The difference between the man who did this and me is that he has these fantasies and he acts out his fantasies. It's somebody much more dangerous than me, because he believes in these fantasies and these are just stories I have made up off the top of my head."

He also disputed evidence of his whereabouts on the day of her murder and claimed not to be a violent person.

Witnesses Susan Gale and Jane Harriman both described seeing Colin Stagg between 9.25am and 10.23am on the day Ms Nickell died.

But Mr Stagg insisted he was home after his own walk on the common long before this - and before the time of the murder.

And he accused police of being "dirty bastards". "You know they set people up," he said.

Derek Crussell, the hypnotherapist who tried to hypnotise Mr Stagg, said he believed Mr Stagg was capable of being hypnotised but had not allowed himself to be.

Steve Clark, head of factual programmes for Carlton Television, said Mr Stagg was paid no fee but received travelling expenses not exceeding £2,000 for the month's work in Birmingham and London.

The programme is due to be broadcast on ITV at 8.30pm.

Plans to replace the Church of England's 900-year-old consistory courts with tribunals which would be heard in secret have come under fire from clergy.

On the opening day of the Church's General Synod, clergy attacked new proposals to move disciplinary procedures behind closed doors, saying that justice had to be seen to be done.

The members of the House of Clergy were speaking in the first public debate on the planned reforms published earlier this month after an 18-month review. The report, *Under Authority*, was broadly welcomed by clergy and will be discussed by the whole Synod later this week.

Impetus for change has come from a series of headline-grabbing scandals involving the sexual indiscretions of clergymen. But the Rev Robert Ellis, communications officer for the diocese of Lichfield, said openness was crucial.

"What are we frightened of? I earn my living doing crisis management in a diocese when things go wrong. The Church of England has got enough credit in the bank so when something does go wrong, we can ride the storm and by doing it in public we are conveying the message that we are confident of what we are doing."

He added that without first-hand access to disciplinary hearings journalists would rely on third-hand accounts which would fuel speculation.

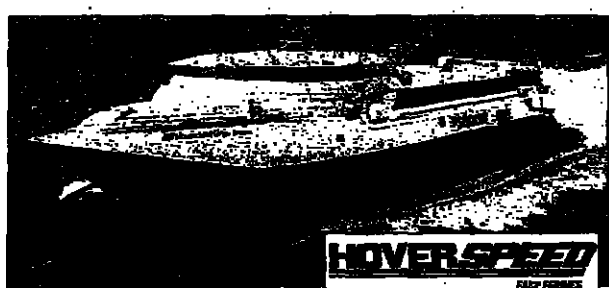
Canon Alan Hawker, who is presenting the report to Synod, pleaded for support, claiming that the present system was "discredited". He said: "There have been three consistory courts in 30 years. This does not mean that the clergy are as white as the driven snow. The reality is that 99.99 per cent of all disciplinary cases in the last 30 years have taken place outside the procedures laid down to deal with them."



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Cash for sink estates goes down the drain

Despite a multi-million pound investment by housing associations to revamp substandard council homes, one-third of estates are proving hard to let, with tenants facing higher rents, according to a new report.

The study, which was supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, found that from 1991 to 1994 housing associations pumped £1.3bn into local authority estates, including £761m in public subsidies, and created 26,000 new homes.

But many homes have proved hard to let out because surrounding estates have "poor reputations" and do not have a "great mix of residents". The associations were also losing their battle to provide cheaper homes through special rent-agreement deals to many of their tenants, the report alleges.

Housing association rents for new homes were in the region of 25 to 75 per cent higher than for equivalent-sized, modernised local-authority homes.

Tenants snub public housing despite funding, writes Glenda Cooper

Only on one out of the 15 estates included in the study were local authority and housing association rents at the same level, despite rent agreements in one-third of the authorities studied.

In one West Midlands metropolitan district, according to the study, potential conflict over rents was growing as council tenants were reluctant to move out of blocks being demolished and into more costly housing-association homes.

Many local authorities and housing associations want to create more mixed communities on council estates but this was not being achieved. The majority of those housed were claiming housing benefit and eight out of 10 recent lettings were to households where no adult was in paid work.

Professor Tony Crook, author of the study, said that poverty-stricken residents were paying out for the privilege of living in new homes. He called for a reassessment of the housing association grant rates so that residents might have to pay lower rents and be less dependent on housing benefits.

He said: "There is likely to be a pay-off from having higher rates of 'tricks and mortar' subsidy so that rents are lower, less housing benefit has to be paid and poverty and unemployment traps are reduced. This would enable the creation of more diverse and less disadvantaged communities."

Professor Crook said housing associations would soon face a "financial squeeze" as they were dipping into their cash reserves in order to pay for the costly and unpopular housing. He concluded that housing associations would do better to concentrate their investment in priority areas where there was action to regenerate and destigmatise the entire estate.

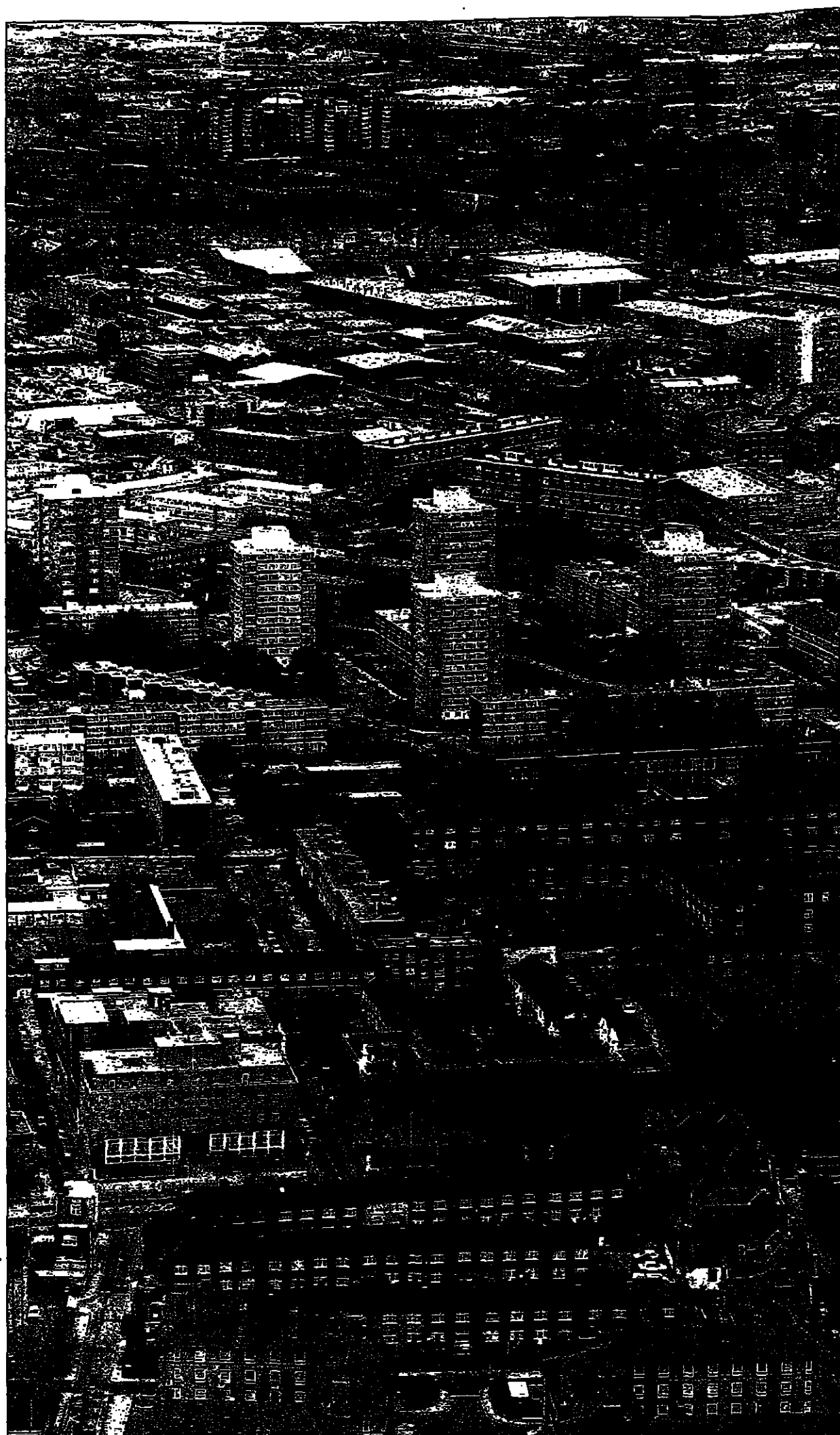
But Rod Cahill, chief executive of the Ealing Family group, which rents out 5,000 homes a year in London and the South-east, said that while housing associations did experience problems he was "very sceptical" about some of the findings.

"I would be very, very doubtful, with the pressure on accommodation as it is, that there was a significant amount of stock that was hard to let. The estates may not be particularly popular but we have no problem in letting."

He said that housing associations were not to blame for the lack of social mix. "Frankly the only way you are going to get a different social mix is by local authorities nominating less needy people on a higher income. In ... London this is simply not credible," he said.

"Housing associations cannot change the economic environment. At the end of the day we are housing providers and a wider role than that has limits."

A new lease of life? *Housing Association investment on local authority housing estates*, The Policy Press, Rodney Lodge, Grange Road, Bristol BS8 4EA; £11.95



Towers of London: Council blocks dominate the eastern skyline of the capital

Photograph: Brian Harris

Dirty tricks won't wash away

Michael Streeter

A book depicting the battle between British Airways and Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic was "one sided, embroidered and distorted", the High Court heard yesterday.

The book, called *Dirty Tricks*, wrongly suggested that a BA public relations consultant Brian Basham, who was later fired, had been a peddler of lies in the company's dirty tricks campaign against the new airline, said Mr Patrick Milmo, QC.

Mr Basham is suing the author of the book, Maryn Gregory, and publishers Little, Brown for libel following its publication in March 1994.

Mr Milmo said the plaintiff had co-operated with the author trusting it would set the record straight after Mr Basham had been "cast to the wolves" by BA management. In a public statement after the humiliating libel settlement in 1993, BA had made Mr Basham a scapegoat for the dirty tricks campaign.

Unhappily, said Mr Milmo, his client's trust in the book was "sadly misplaced". Apart from accusing Mr Basham of leaking stories he knew to be untrue to the press, the book also suggested he tried to procure the false arrest of a bouncer at Heaven, a London nightclub which is owned by Branson.

Reading extracts to the jury, he said it suggested Mr Basham had used a journalist, Dominic Prince, to glean information about a report made by security consultants alleging there was drug dealing, male prostitution and a fire risk at the London club.

Outlining the history of the conflict, Mr Milmo said that the then chairman Lord King, chief executive Sir Colin Marshall, head of marketing Robert Ayling and head of public affairs David Burnside, had become concerned about the favourable publicity surrounding Mr Branson's new airline. Mr Basham, employed as a consultant since 1985, had drawn up a detailed report outlining the rivals' "strengths and weaknesses". This included a reference to Heaven which Mr Basham regarded as "risky" because of its reputation and therefore a legitimate subject for discussion.

Mr Milmo said the defendants also relied on two interviews that his client had given in October and November 1991. The first, with the now defunct *Today* newspaper, had been an attempt to trap Mr Basham, as the interview was secretly taped and later played to Mr Branson. In it, Mr Basham said he wanted damaging stories about Mr Branson which could be distanced from BA—a misleading interpretation, said Mr Milmo.

In the second with *Sunday Times* journalist Nick Rufford, Mr Basham mentioned rumours that Virgin Atlantic could not get credit to buy fuel, but said the story needed checking out. *The Sunday Times* later ran an anti-British Airways story alleging dirty tricks. The case continues.

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NHS to ditch blood-quality kitemark

Louise Jury

Blood-bags which caused a health service scare when they proved faulty are being tested for reintroduction into the NHS.

The National Blood Service is using Tuta bags in Newcastle and Southampton for a trial period after the manufacturers made modifications to prevent a repeat of problems experienced in July last year. Stephen Clegg, a patient at the

Princess Margaret Hospital in Swindon, needed intensive care treatment after being given blood from a bag which was infected.

The move to reintroduce the blood packs comes as the service is relinquishing a hard-won British Standards Institution quality assurance mark at the Oxford transfusion centre — the centre which identified the precise problem last year with the blood-bag seals.

The National Blood Author-

ity (NBA) yesterday insisted quality standards were as high as ever and they had every confidence in the modified bags.

But Tessa Jowell, shadow health minister, is raising the matter with Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, and asking him to guarantee the safety of the blood supply. "I'm concerned that the blood service is abandoning an important benchmark of quality," she said. She also called for an inde-

pendent check before Tuta bags were used again. "Donors give blood because they trust the blood service to use the donations properly."

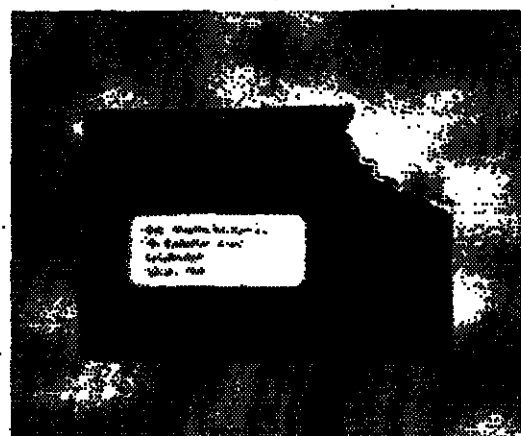
Dr Angela Robinson, medical director of the NBA which runs the National Blood Service (NBS), said exhaustive checks were carried out as part of a new round of contracting for the supply of blood-bags in England and they had confidence in the new manufacturing procedure. "Lessons have been learnt as

a result of last year's incident that have enabled the NBS to introduce new national systems which guarantee the quality of products supplied."

The service also defended the decision to relinquish the British Standards Institution quality standard from 2 December. In a memo to staff, executive director Gary Austin said there was "no additional benefit" in having the registration, the costs of which were "considerable".

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Blasphemy film ban backed by Europe

Patricia Wynn Davies
Strasbourg

Free-speech activists, humanists and lawyers united in fury yesterday after the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the ancient law of blasphemy does not infringe the right to freedom of expression.

In a ruling that appeared to bend over backwards in Britain's favour, the Strasbourg judges declared by a seven-two majority that the fact that the archaic law did not treat all religions on an equal footing did not affect its legitimacy.

The judges said that "a wider margin of appreciation" was available to states in relation to matters "liable to offend intimate personal convictions in the sphere of morals or religion", as they declared that the ban on Nigel Wingrove's film *Visions of Ecstasy* did not breach Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Mr Wingrove's case was that the law not only interfered with the film director's right to freedom of speech but was discriminatory, because it did not cover the many religions practised in the United Kingdom other than Christianity.

The 20-minute video, depicting the erotic visions of St Teresa of Avila, was seven years ago refused a certificate by the British Board of Film Classification, whose decision was upheld by the Video Appeals Committee.

Mr Wingrove, 39, said: "I was told it would go against me because it has become very political now." The combination of an earlier blasphemy ruling in favour of Austria and the Lord Chancellor's visit yesterday to Strasbourg told against him, he said, even though the Church of England had never called for him to be prosecuted.

Mark Stephens, of Mr Wingrove's solicitors Stephens Innocent, said the decision was

"very worrying". When the case had been argued the court was "buzzing" over the position statement put out by Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, last year about the Government's attitude to the court.

In the midst of controversy last year over the court's ruling that the killings by the Special Air Service of three IRA terrorists on Gibraltar in 1988 were unlawful, Mr Rifkind said the British government had been "concerned about some recent judgments of the court" and stressed that it was "important that the Strasbourg institutions gave full weight to the principle of the margin of appreciation."

Yesterday's decision contradicts a 14-2 ruling in favour of Mr Wingrove by the European Commission on Human Rights before referring it to the full court. At that time, Mr Stephens said, Nicholas Bratza QC, the UK's commissioner, had made a speech saying the BBFC ban broke Article 10. Mr Stephens said he felt the court would have taken Mr Rifkind's statement into account.

Had the court upheld the commission's view not only would Mr Wingrove's film have been unbanned but the UK would have been obliged to abolish the law of blasphemy.

As it is, a law which protects only the Church of England and no other religion has been repressed. When the Government was pressed by Muslim leaders to extend the law to Muslims, the then Home Office minister John Patten, insisted that it was "inappropriate for dealing with matters of faith".

The National Secular Society is organising a public meeting to protest about the decision. This decision effectively gives special privilege to Christians to restrict freedom of speech and to silence any criticism of their religion, Keith Porteous Wood, the NSS general secretary, said.



Foot soldiers: Ramblers on a protest walk yesterday across land in the Chilterns belonging to the Earl of Macclesfield, who has rejected attempts by Oxfordshire County Council to make a public access agreement for an 'area of outstanding natural beauty' Photograph: John Vooz

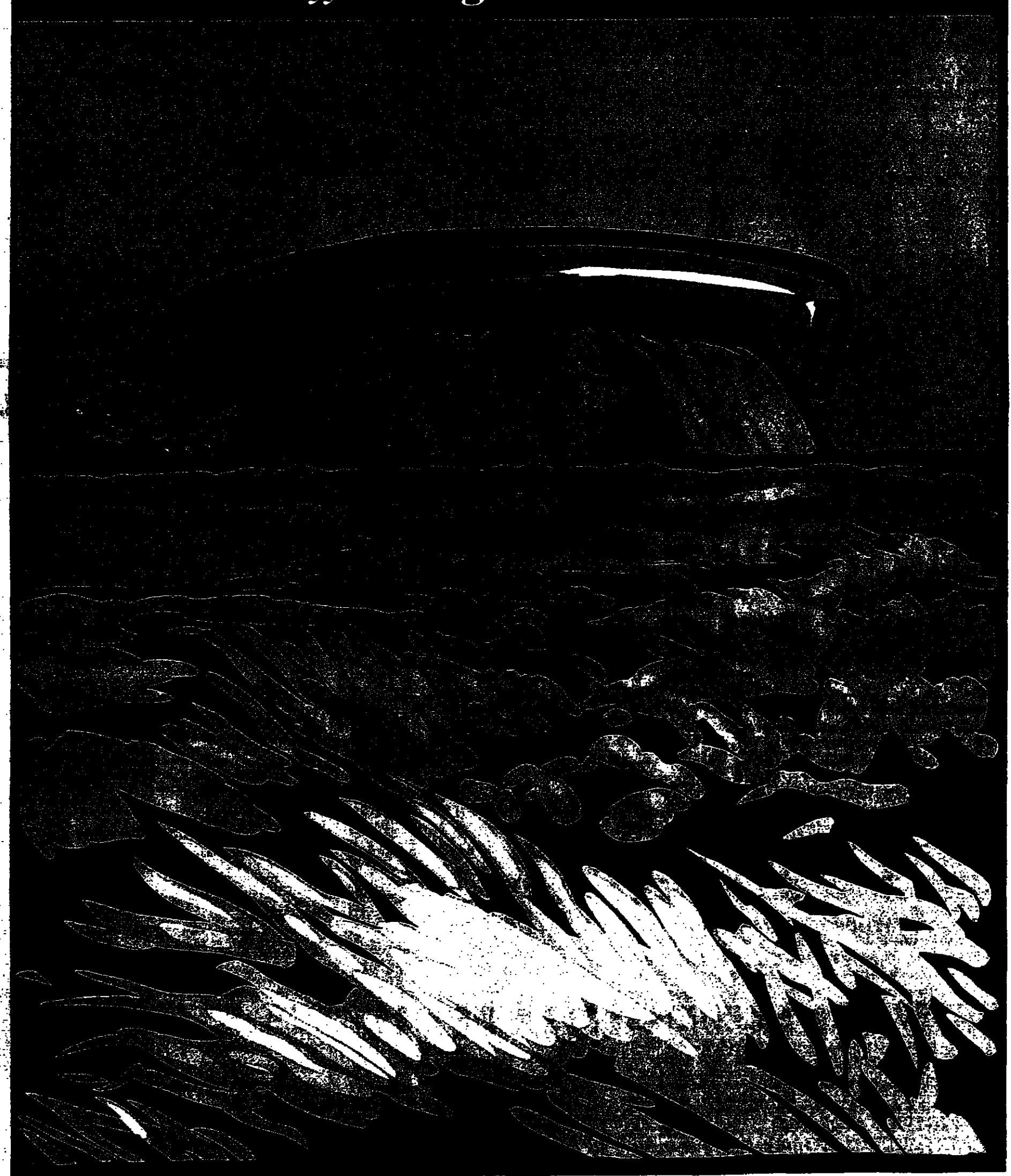
Walkers on path to change

Ramblers strayed from the straight and narrow path in the Chilterns yesterday to demonstrate the shortcomings of the voluntary approach to public access advocated by their old adversary, the Country Landowners' Association, writes Stephen Goodwin.

With the Labour Party pledged to legislate for a right to roam over uncultivated land, the CLA has become increasingly keen to promote a less radical option.

Tomorrow, the CLA will hold a conference in London to sell its ideas for giving the public more access to the countryside through voluntary agreements with landowners. But the Ramblers' Association says landowners have had every chance to "volunteer" access and failed to do so. "It is time to use the law to end this dishonest farce," Kate Ashbrook, the RA's chairman.

BT cut 20% off evening calls to Australia and NZ.



Mackay steps up court reform bid

Pressure by the United Kingdom to reform the European Court of Human Rights moved up a gear yesterday as behind-the-scenes diplomacy gave way to a well-publicised visit to Strasbourg by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, to press the Government's concerns, writes Patricia Wynn Davies.

The discussions centred on the so-called "margin of appreciation" - under which the court can recognise the right of states to order their social and domestic affairs according to national traditions - and on the appointment of judges, and the procedure of the court following the implementation of Protocol 11.

The protocol, signed by the UK in May 1994, will merge the European Commission for Human Rights, the first-tier body which draws up advisory opinions, and the European Court of Human Rights into a single permanent court.

During the round of talks the Lord Chancellor met the president of the court, the Norwegian judge Rolv Ryssdal, Daniel Tarschys, secretary-general of the court's 40-nation umbrella body, the Council of Europe,

and Stefan Treschsel, the president of the commission.

The European Convention on Human Rights was drawn up in response to the gross violations during the Second World War. The UK ratified it in 1951 and later gave individuals the right to petition personally.

But Lord Mackay said: "Circumstances change and continue to change. While it remains necessary to have a system which can concentrate on substantial issues of fundamental human rights, it is just as important that the new court, without in any way diminishing the standards enshrined in the convention, continues (like the present court) to recognise the need for member states to manage their own affairs in full recognition of their national character, traditions, religious beliefs and moral standards."

Yesterday's visit follows relentless criticism by Tory MPs, particularly Euro-sceptics, of the Strasbourg court after a long line of verdicts against the UK. Lord Mackay pressed the case for greater opportunities to examine candidates' abilities and expertise in advance of the selection process.

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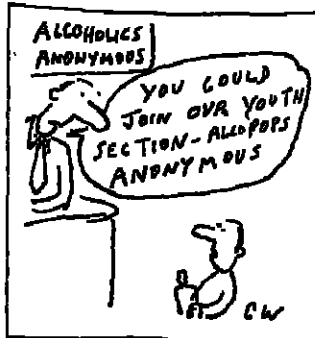
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Real tax rise will be at least 2.5p



Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Tax increases already planned by the Government, and due to be confirmed in today's Budget, will be equivalent to more than 1p on the basic rate of income tax next year and more than 2.5p in 1998/99. A series of measures for future years, part of the tax rises announced by the Conservatives after they won

the last election, add up to nearly £10bn over three years. These will have to be set against the tax reductions Kenneth Clarke is expected to introduce this afternoon. Most of the revenues will come from raising road fuel duties and tobacco duties 5 per cent and 3 per cent faster than inflation respectively. These two increases will yield extra revenues of about £2.5bn next year and £4bn in 1998/99.

In addition more than £1bn will be raised during 1998/99 from the introduction of self-assessment for income tax and new tax arrangements for the construction industry. "The Government has institutionalised increases every year," said Kevin Darlington, an economist at brokers Hoare Govett. "We tend to forget about these automatic rises." The net result, even if the

Chancellor does reduce the basic rate of income tax, could well be that taxation will still take a rising share of Gross Domestic Product in future years. Last year's Budget forecast that the tax share of the economy would rise from 37.75 per cent this year to 39 per cent at the turn of the century. Norman Lamont first announced that road fuel duties would increase on average by at least 5 per cent in real terms

every year, while duties on tobacco would climb at least 3 per cent a year in real terms. The decision was part of the package of tax hikes needed to close the gap in the public sector finances after the 1992 election. In March, Mr Lamont also froze personal tax allowances and restricted mortgage interest relief to the new 20 per cent lower rate of tax. Mr Clarke, in his first Budget in

November 1993, cut tax relief on mortgage interest payments further and introduced new taxes on air travel and insurance premiums. The draconian increases were a response to a ballooning budget deficit which was then forecast to reach £50bn in 1993/94. A surge in spending before the last election and the effects of the recession had put public finances on an unsustainable path.



Mark the Chancellor: Your Budget scorecard

HEADLINE PROBLEMS	The state we're in	Clarke's medicine	KEEPING THE VOTERS SWEET	The state we're in	Clarke's medicine
Income tax cuts expected, toward government aim of 20p basic rate. Clarke's options are to reduce the basic rate by 1p, 2p or even 3p in the pound; increase allowances by more than the rate of inflation; increase tax thresholds by more than the rate of inflation; widen the lower rate 20p band.	Current rates are 20% up to £3,900, 24% up to £25,500, and 40% above. Personal £3,765; married couple £1,790 (higher for older couples); aged 65-74, £4,910; over 75, £5,090.	Profit-related pay up to £4,000 or 20 per cent of salary saves a basic rate tax payer up to £1,000 a year, a higher rate payer £1,600 a year.	Petrol duty should rise by 5 per cent more than inflation, adding 3p a litre. Norman Lamont introduced the principle that duties on road fuel should increase in real terms every year. Tobacco duties will increase by 3 per cent on top of inflation, adding about 12p to a packet of 20 cigarettes.	The duty on a litre of petrol stands at 34.3p, and on a packet of cigarettes £1.83.	
Profit-related pay suggested as a likely candidate for abolition. Tax relief for about 3 million employees in PFI schemes costs close to £1bn. Restricting the tax relief might be more palatable.	The planning total for departmental spending set in last year's Budget was £260.2bn in 1995/96, £269.2bn in 1997/98 and £275.6bn in 1998/99.	The current rate of corporation tax for small businesses is 24 per cent for 350,000 companies. The standard rate is 33 per cent.	John Major promised to abolish capital gains tax and inheritance tax so that wealth could "cascade down" the generations. But Clarke is unlikely to deliver. Abolishing capital gains tax would give a huge boost to the tax avoidance industry while abolishing inheritance tax would benefit fewer than 25,000 voters.	The first £5,300 of capital gains are tax free. Sale of principal home is free of the tax. The first £200,000 of an estate is free of inheritance tax, the rest taxed at 40 per cent.	
Government spending planned for hospitals and schools is likely to rise. Roads programme is expected to suffer. Clarke will have to reduce the public spending "control total" by £1bn-3bn. Lower inflation means there can be cuts without any reduction in real spending. Watch for an announcement about social security fraud.	The benefit is worth just under £5.20 a week.	The tax on alcohol is currently 10-15p a pint less than tax on a premium lager.	The Chancellor might decide to do more to encourage savings by making Peps and Tesas even more attractive or augment the enterprise investment scheme.	Pep schemes allow the investment of up to £5,000 a year and up to £3,000 a year in a single company PEP. People can put up to £9,000 over 10 years in a PEP.	
Single parent benefit might fall victim to the pro-family lobby on the Conservative back benches even though the money can make a huge difference to recipients.	The tax on alcohol is currently 10-15p a pint less than tax on a premium lager.	The current rate of corporation tax for small businesses is 24 per cent for 350,000 companies. The standard rate is 33 per cent.	Redundancy pay might lose its tax exemption, saving the Treasury £1.5bn.	The first £30,000 of redundancy pay is currently tax free.	
Alcopops a swinging increase in excise duty likely. Accounts for less than 2 per cent of volume of the alcoholic drinks market. Strongly criticised for being aimed at young people. Brewers would like to see a cut in duty on beer to fight back against Cross-Channel shopping and smuggling.	The tax on alcohol is currently 10-15p a pint less than tax on a premium lager.	The current rate of corporation tax for small businesses is 24 per cent for 350,000 companies. The standard rate is 33 per cent.	The Chancellor will try to close tax loopholes. Will probably, as usual, extend national insurance to the ever more esoteric means that companies use to pay bonuses to high earners.	Life assurance policies are this year's hot tip for being brought into the tax net.	
The Government likes to encourage small businesses. A reduction in the rate of corporation tax by 1 or 2 per cent is a possibility. The reintroduction of first year capital allowances is an outside chance. Expect further snips at red tape.	The current rate of corporation tax for small businesses is 24 per cent for 350,000 companies. The standard rate is 33 per cent.	The current rate of corporation tax for small businesses is 24 per cent for 350,000 companies. The standard rate is 33 per cent.	VAT is not expected to be raised or extended. Clarke is vulnerable to Labour attacks over its record of raising VAT.	The standard VAT rate is 17.5 per cent. A range of items - including food, construction, passenger transport, children's clothes, books and newspapers and prescription drugs remain zero rated.	
Insurance premium tax introduced by Clarke in 1994. Insurers fear an increase this year.	The tax of 2.5 per cent applies to non-life insurance premiums.	The tax of 2.5 per cent applies to non-life insurance premiums.	Privatisation proceeds are a handy source of money to finance tax cuts. Mr Clarke may announce new asset sales.	Last year's Budget put privatisation revenues at £4bn in the current year.	
Gaming duties might fall, to help pools and betting companies compete with the National Lottery.	Pools tax is 26.5 per cent. General betting duty was cut to 6.75 per cent last year.	Pools tax is 26.5 per cent. General betting duty was cut to 6.75 per cent last year.	The Public Finance Initiative allows planned capital spending by the public sector to be cut. After slow start Clarke will probably predict a big increase in PFI investment in coming years.	Capital spending plans fell from just under £22bn in 1995/96 to £19.2bn by 1998/99. The PFI was due to see spending of £1.9bn this year.	
Clarke might have some wheeze for extra taxes on privatised electricity, water and gas companies to undermine Labour's plans for a windfall tax.	These companies would face paying some £50n-100n under Labour.	These companies would face paying some £50n-100n under Labour.	The contingency reserve, planned expenditure not allocated to any particular department will, as always, be cut.	Some of the £2.5bn reserve this year and the £5bn for next year will pay for BSE and gun compensation.	
Clarke will probably try to close tax loopholes when it comes to corporate taxation too.	After the puzzle about unexpectedly low corporate VAT payments last year, he could tighten rules.	After the puzzle about unexpectedly low corporate VAT payments last year, he could tighten rules.	The Public Sector Borrowing Requirement has to be no higher than projected in last year's Budget to make markets applaud and minimise the pressure on him to raise interest rates.	According to the Treasury's latest published forecasts the PSBR should be £26.9bn this year and £23.1bn next year. Lower figures will come today.	

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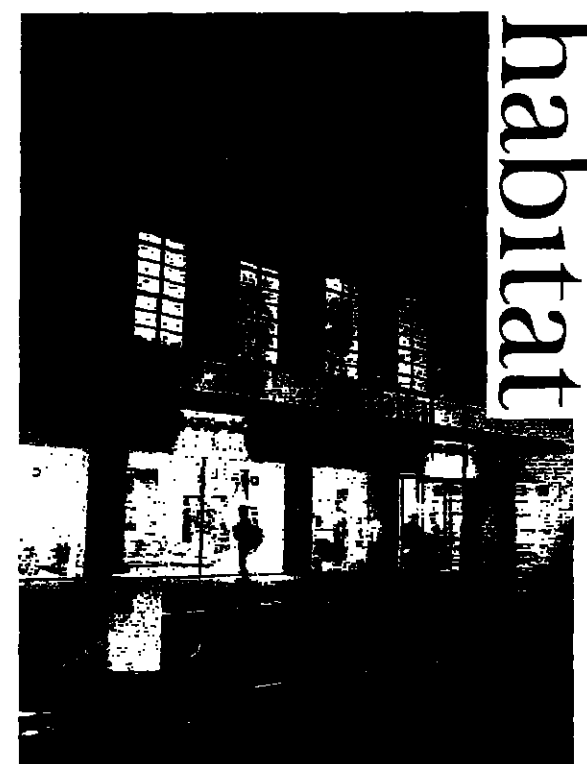
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Classical artists score a hit with own pop charts

David Lister
Arts News Editor

Belated recognition has come from chart compilers that there can be music that is neither pop nor classical: as a character in the 60s film *Goodbye Columbus* put it when asked his musical tastes, "I'm into the semi-classical."

The decision by the chart compilers CIN to give in to months of lobbying from the record industry means that film, television and stage soundtracks, opera compilations, classical performers who want to go down-market and pop performers who want to go up will now have their own chart rather than being lost in the lower end of the main pop charts.

The UK's Classical Crossover Chart starts on 29 December and will feature albums deemed classical in content and/or performance, but which are not eligible for the classical chart.

According to CIN's charts director, Catherine Pusey, the new top 50 crossover chart (to run alongside the existing pop and classical charts) will include non-traditional interpretations of classical works, classical-style soundtracks and compilation albums consisting of extracts of classical works. "Up till now everything has been mixed in together and there have been no properly defined eligibility criteria," she said.

Debate over whether to introduce such a chart has been going on within the industry and on the pages of the trade paper *Music Week* for over a year. Complaints from classical record labels concerning albums excluded from the classical charts have been increasing. But recent events have proved a catalyst for change.

High-profile performers such as the opera singer Lesley Garrett, the sixties icon Marianne Faithfull and the classical



How a classical chart might look. From left, John Williams, Plácido Domingo, José Carreras, Luciano Pavarotti and Nigel Kennedy

Photomontage: Jonathan Anstee

guitarist John Williams have criticised what they see as the unfairness of having to be judged either pop or classical.

The prime catalyst for the change was Miss Garrett, the English National Opera soprano. She sings solo concertos at large venues such as the Royal Albert Hall and has released albums of what could be termed classic light music by composers such as Gershwin and Jerome

Kern. But these high-selling albums were ruled ineligible for the classical charts.

Her album *A Soprano In Hollywood* would have topped the classical charts but languished at number 57 in the pop charts. "It was not being judged against its peers," Miss Garrett said. "Instead I was being compared to Blur and Oasis, which made absolutely no sense at all."

Faithfull complained that her album of Kurt Weill songs, *20th Century Blues*, was refused entry to the classical charts, though as an album of cabaret songs it had not been intended for a traditional audience.

John Williams' latest album, *John Williams Plays The Movies*, caused considerable problems as the main album was movie themes but the package also contained a bonus album of him playing classical music.

The package was deemed ineligible for the classical charts, and Williams's chagrin is unlikely to be eased. Ms Pusey said it was also unlikely to be eligible for the new crossover chart.

Miss Garrett, Faithfull and Williams are not alone in falling between two charts. The composer Karl Jenkins's *Adiemus: Songs Of Sanctuary* was initially refused entry to both pop and classical charts as it could not

be classified as either. That disc sold a million copies, eventually topping the classical chart after the organisers relented.

"There is a public appetite for music that sounds classical, but isn't," the classical music author Norman Lebrecht said. "Other such proto-classics include Nyman's score for the film *The Piano*, the rhythm backed records of the Soweto String Quartet, John Williams's theme

music for the Atlanta Olympics and the quasi-minimal music of Ryūichi Sakamoto, the Japanese film composer of *The Last Emperor* and *The Sheltering Sky*."

Brian Hopkins, operations director of the classical label BMG Conifer, said of the new chart: "It's extremely good news because it gives a much needed profile to records which might not otherwise be noticed."

Leading article, page 17

Top of the crossover chart

1. Best Opera Album Ever	Various
2. No 1 Classical Album	Various
3. Something Wonderful	Bryn Terfel
4. A Soprano In Hollywood	Lesley Garrett
5. Songs Of Sanctuary: Adiemus	Karl Jenkins
6. A Lasting Inspiration	Jacqueline du Pré
7. Braveheart official sound track	LSO/Horne
8. 100 Popular Classics	Various
9. Best Classical Album Ever	Various
10. The Piano official sound track	Michael Nyman

First Test Chart. Source: CIN

Sadist blames murders on gay lover

Jonathan Foster

The self-confessed sadist accused of serial murder yesterday told a jury it was his gay lover who killed four men in North Wales last year.

Peter Moore said he still loved "Jason", whom he met nine months ago in the public gallery of the court where he was taken to face the murder indictment.

He bought time for Jason to escape by making confessions to the police, Mr Moore said under cross-examination. And he warned that Jason would kill again.

Mr Moore, 50, entered the witness-box at Mold Crown Court to admit he was a homosexual who derived pleasure from painful humiliation of partners. But he had never killed or caused serious injury.

In late summer last year, Mr Moore told the jury he met Alan Williams, a 48-year-old hotel worker. They became lovers, and Mr Moore coined a term of endearment - "Jason" was the character in the *Friday the 13th* film series who killed with a knife.

Mr Moore denies murdering Henry Roberts, 56, of Anglesey; Edward Carthy, 28, from Birkenhead, Merseyside; Keith Randles, 49, from Chester; and Tony Davies, 40, of Colwyn Bay. All were stabbed to death between September and December, 1995.

The prosecution has claimed that Mr Moore, of Kinnel Bay, Conwy, admitted in detail to the murders during interviews with detectives lasting more than 13 hours. Only when questioning was about to end did Moore claim another man was involved.

Mr Moore told the jury he brought Jason, a 25-year-old combat knife as a gift. He said he was at the scene of three killings, but did not participate in any. He had tried to stop Jason, but, on one occasion, he was forced by him at knifepoint to drive to the scene of a murder.

The last killing was the first Mr Moore witnessed. He told the jury that he and Jason had been discussing a business partnership. They had parked at a beach popular with gays when Mr Davies arrived and walked to the water's edge followed by Jason. Mr Moore said he went to the beach because he was worried for the man's safety, but his shouted warnings came too late.

Mr Moore broke down as he told the jury: "I knelt down and I held his hand. He said he loved his wife and he'd got two children... and then he gave a sigh, and he died on the beach. He died in my arms."

Mr Moore said he later fought with Jason, and added: "I don't know where he is now. The trial continues."



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Voting with your feet: A French driver helps the blockade of the A1 motorway near Paris yesterday

Photograph: Jean-Christophe Kahn/Reuters

Driving a hard bargain for British truckers

Mary Dejevsky
Paris
and Charlie Bain

The Government will try to ensure that compensation claims by British lorry drivers stranded by a French blockade are dealt with swiftly by the authorities in France, Transport Secretary Sir George Young said yesterday.

He told the Commons that many owner lorry drivers were facing ruin because of the dispute and he would put further pressure on the French to help.

His comments came as stranded British lorry drivers in Calais retaliated by using their lorries to block off the whole

port to tourist traffic yesterday afternoon. They later lifted the blockade, threatening to re-block the port if renewed negotiations between French drivers and management broke down.

After a weekend in which barriers had been eased, French lorry drivers hardened their week-old strike, halting heavy goods traffic through Channel ports for the first time and tightening the noose on Paris.

Five crossing points on the frontier with Germany were blocked, lorry traffic on the main motorway link with Belgium was halted, and two of the motorway lifelines - the A10 from Paris to Bordeaux and the A7 from Lyon to Marseille - were cut in several places.

Blockades were mounted on more oil refineries and distribution centres, at Dunkirk in the north and at Port Nouvelle in the south west, bringing the total number of fuel centres blocked to 20. More than 100 garages were reported to be out of petrol, but Esso said the situation was deteriorating.

By lunchtime yesterday, France's central traffic information service had counted more than 130 roadblocks across the country.

Raising the issue for the first time at question time in the Commons yesterday, David Shaw, Conservative MP for Dover, said there were "serious allegations" that the Channel Tunnel fire was the result of sabotage from a striking French lorry driver.

Sir George replied the French inquiry into the fire would "want to investigate the allegations" of sabotage.

Sir George added that he took the compensation issue very seriously. "Many owner lorry drivers have their whole future threatened by this dispute and many of the smaller haulage companies face a very difficult financial future. We do propose to take further action to ensure that compensation claims are promptly processed by the French authorities."

In France, the six trade unions involved in the dispute had ordered the strike to be stopped up as they went into new talks with employers and a government-nominated mediator late on Sunday afternoon. Those talks were adjourned at 5am yesterday, but resumed 12 hours later, following an appeal from the employment minister, Jacques Barrot, to the employers to "make a real effort" to reach a settlement.

The prime minister, Alain Juppe, added a note of near-desperation: "I am following the negotiations hour by hour. The Government has done everything it can to get the talks under way. Now they must resume and succeed."

The drivers, who are claiming a 35 hour week, retirement at 55, lower fuel taxes and higher pay, won their first victory with the appointment of a mediator, Robert Cros. Before that, ministers had wanted the employers and unions to settle the dispute between themselves.

Almost three-quarters of French people, according to a recent poll, support the strike, and so it seems the lorry drivers will be able to hold out for quite some time yet.

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Police neglect contributes to prisoner's death

Louise Jury

The jury at the third inquest of Leon Patterson, who was found naked and heavily bruised after six days in police custody, yesterday said neglect contributed to his death.

Coroner Leonard Gorodkin had described aspects of Mr Patterson's treatment as "dreadful" but said he believed there was no direct link with his death. He said: "I do not believe that in this case the possibility of neglect should be added to your verdict." But the jury at Manchester coroner's court rejected his advice to return a verdict of "misadventure to which neglect contributed".

Mr Patterson, 31, from north London, had absconded from a seven-year prison sentence while on home leave four years ago. He was then arrested in Stockport, Greater Manchester, on suspicion of stealing and held at Stockport police station due to a prison officers' dispute.

On the day of his death, he was taken to Stockport magistrates court where he spent

eight hours lying naked and handcuffed on a stone floor before being transferred to a holding cell at nearby Denton police station where he was later found dead.

There was medical disagreement on the cause of death, but it was considered to have been a "complex metabolic disorder" resulting from drug withdrawal symptoms and gastroenteritis. Mr Patterson was a heroin addict.

A jury at an earlier inquest said that Mr Patterson was unlawfully killed. But the police overturned the verdict in the High Court, which ordered a new hearing.

Deborah Coles, of the pressure group Inquest which has funded the Patterson family's legal representation, said the decision was a damning indictment of his treatment. "The attitude of the police and police doctors was one of callous indifference and appalling neglect." But a Greater Manchester police spokesman said: "We acted at all times in accordance with the medical advice."

DAILY POEM

From Hallaig

By Sorley MacLean

'Time, the deer is in the wood of Hallaig'

The window is nailed and boarded through which I saw the West and my love is at the Burn of Hallaig, a birch tree, and she has always been

between Inver and Milk Hollow, here and there about Baile-chuirn: she is a birch, a hazel, a straight, slender young rowan.

In Sreapadal of my people where Norman and big Hector were, their daughters and their sons are a wood going up beside the stream.

Proud tonight the pine cocks crowing on the top of Choc an Ra, straight their backs in the moonlight - they are not the wood I love.

I will wait for the birch wood until it comes up by the cairn, until the whole ridge from Beinn na Lice will be under its shade.

Sorley MacLean, who died last Sunday, was born on Raasay, in the Western Isles, in 1911. His family were Gaelic-speaking crofters of many generations and although MacLean wrote poetry in English, it was to Gaelic he returned as a working poet in his thirties and forties. A bilingual collection, *Reolhair in Contraigh (Spring Tide and Neap Tide)*, appeared in 1976. His *Collected Poems: From Wood to Ridge* are published by Carcanet.

Obituary, page 16

Miracle fails for east Germans

Schwerin — The freshly gilded galleys of the epicurean fantasy that is home to the legislature of Germany's most sparsely populated region are a dazzling display of affluence. Yuppies Ossies (those from east Germany) race along the cobbled streets of the capital in BMWs, jewellery stores tempt consumers with a selection that would be the envy of Bond Street. The billions flowing into this part of the East have evidently been well spent.

The place is flush with money, yet the locals are whingeing. This may have something to do with the fact that unemployment in the surrounding region of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania is 40 per cent, that the crime rate and alcoholism are among the highest in the EU, and some people feel they have become second-class citizens in their own country. They have seen one wall tumble, six years ago, but now they are trapped behind a new barrier, and there appears no escape.

There is, in the view of those who have prospered in the ruins of Communism, a Darwinian inevitability about the failure, one that can be enumerated. "About 70 per cent of people have been able to make themselves fit for the market economy," says Bernd Seite, the Land's Prime Minister, who used to be a vet in the old East Germany (GDR). "But 20-25 per cent have not succeeded."

Their flaws are allegedly inherent in their make-up, which can only be erased by time. "It will take at least a generation to change the mental outlook of the people," Mr Seite predicts.

It is a long convalescence and a high ratio of wastage, which still does not explain the Ossies' remarkable under-performance in the job market. In Mr Seite's regional administration, perhaps the only employer that can offer job security, two thirds of staff are recent immigrants from western Germany. The rest of the public sector is bleeding from a thousand cuts, with teachers next in line for the chop because of the falling number of pupils. Ten per cent of the population have emigrated in the past six years and the birth rate among the remainder is down by a third.

The losers demonstrate their displeasure by voting for the ex-communist Party of Democratic Socialism, by hitting the bottle and taking the winners' BMWs for a joy-ride, or by beating up foreigners. Mecklenburg's fascist thugs have the fiercest reputation in Germany, but lately they have been venting their anger not at Turks or Poles, but at Wessies (west German) tourists. The new battleground is the camp-sites along the Baltic coast, where the local lads have been attacking rich "foreigners" from as far away as

The demise of Communism did not bring riches to all those freed from its bonds, writes Imre Karacs

Munich or Berlin with baseball bats. Class war has arrived, and there seems no shortage of youths willing to fight on the beaches.

Opportunities for more meaningful leisure are scarce, and employment prospects for a school-leaver practically nil. The region has been in economic decline for centuries, and the few factories that sprang up along the coast during the Third Reich and the Communist era lie idle.

There is nothing unusual in that, except that here the ravages of capitalism were inflicted not by blind market forces, but by wanton West Germans. At the People's Shipyard in Stralsund, the curses of the lucky few who still have jobs are daubed in huge letters on a three-storey high steel structure once destined to be the hull of a new vessel. "We want our millions back," they proclaim, in a gesture as futile as it is bitter.

The millions in question — DM850m (£340m) to be precise, were literally stolen from the region's shipyards by the western company Bremer Vulkan. They were government subsidies earmarked for the east and siphoned off by crooked managers in Bremen to keep western workers in jobs. The scam was only detected this year when the EU started asking questions about the investment it had approved. The local management — consisting of Wessies — never complained.

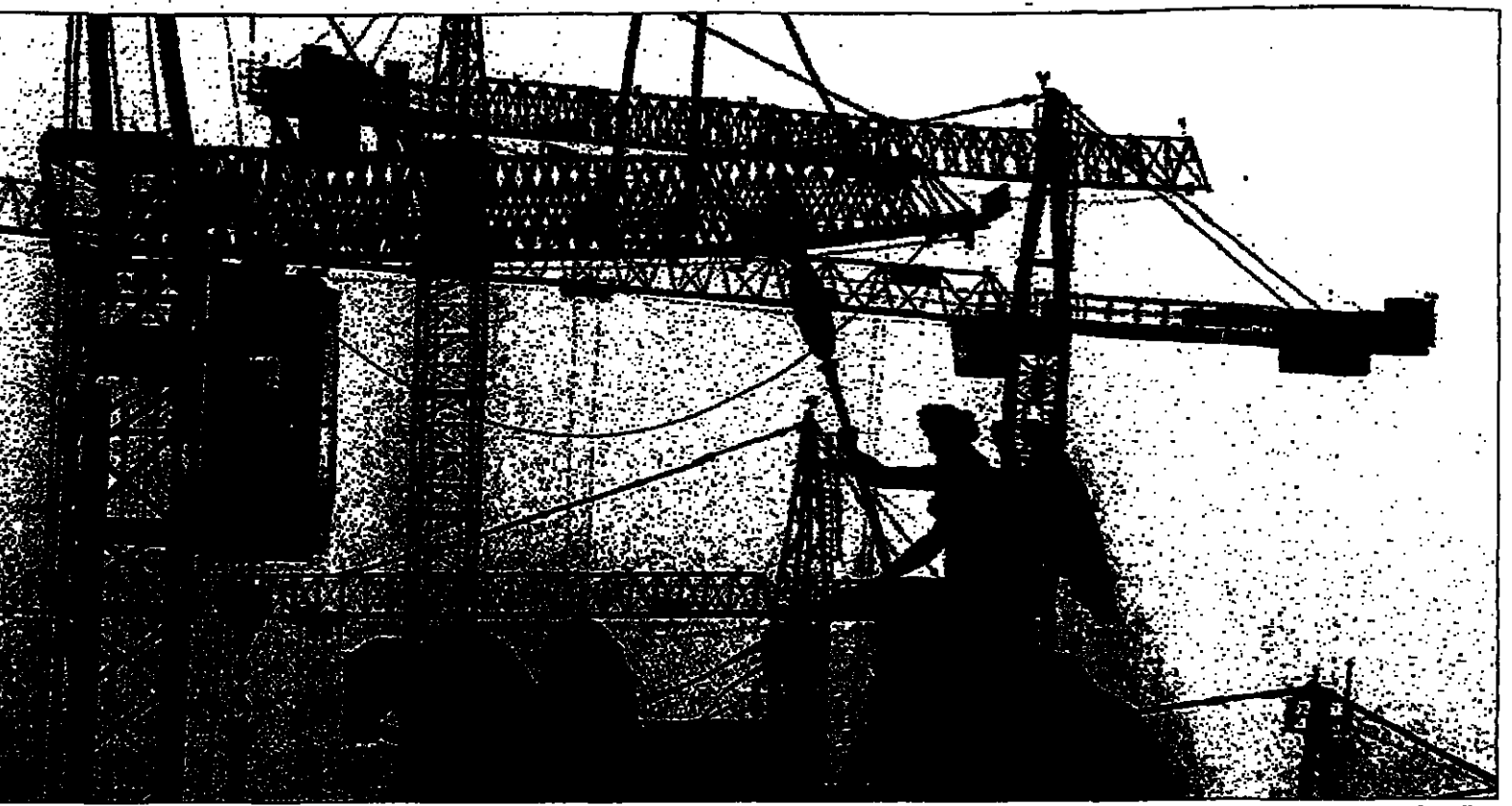
The legacy of the Vulkan era is an unfinished hangar next to the hulls where a few hundred workers weld together bits of metal delivered on wooden carts. The shipyard is kept afloat temporarily by the local government, its workforce of 8,500 before unification eroded to 2,000 today. Half of them will be out of work by the end of next year.

It is not just the relatively uneducated who are condemned to a life of idleness by one of the most potent forms of western cunning. In the pretty Hanseatic town of Greifswald, a plaque at the 500-year old university commemorates students who in 1870 gave their lives in France for the Prussian Fatherland.

There are few signs of recent skirmishes, other than the metaphorical blood on the carpet and a decimated staff list. Over the past six years most senior academics have been culled in a process described by the Rector as "renewal", and replaced invariably by Wessies fleeing from lack of tenure at home. None the less, some rays

of hope are penetrating this gloom. Cut off from the rest of Germany by a lack of roads and fast rail links, the remnants of the Hanseatic world in the east have been thrust back into the sea. The ships are sailing again to Sweden, Denmark, Finland and the lost cities of Tallinn and Riga, and trade is resuming with the other half of Pomerania across the Polish border. The eastern Baltic is forecast to become the fastest growing region in Europe in coming decades, its cities serving as magnets to tourists and industry. A golden future lies ahead, though how Schwerin and its hinterland will survive the present without a social explosion is hard to see.

Berlin's horsemen look forward to brave new city at Europe's heart



The Quadriga atop Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, pictured at dawn, in front of huge cranes erected on Europe's biggest construction site, where building development is set to continue until the Millennium
Photograph: AP

Dope to go on sale in German pharmacies

Imre Karacs Bonn

Stoned, she may have expected to be, but not in this sense of the word. Heide Moser, Health Minister of the northern state of Schleswig-Holstein, has been showered with verbal missiles for her plan to legalise cannabis.

Ms Moser, condemned by the leader of Germany's governing Christian Democrats as "irresponsible", has been accused by another senior right-winger of "leading the march towards a Republic of the Inebriated". The dealers designated for the task were outraged: "A large majority of pharmacists oppose the sale of hashish," thundered their national organisation.

Schleswig-Holstein's government has approved a pilot project proposed by Ms Moser, a Social Democrat, to make cannabis available over the counter in chemists.

In order to prevent "drug tourism", shoppers will have to show identity papers to prove they are local residents. In addition, cannabis users, estimated to number 50-80,000 in the state, could be required to register to receive special coupons.

The scheme's objective is to sever the link between hard and soft drugs, thus depriving the underworld of a large chunk of its income. With no hash to peddle, it is thought, many dealers would go out of business.

The regional government, citing medical opinion, is adamant that marijuana poses less risk to health than the "intensive intake of alcohol or

nicotine". Weaned off the dealers and at last decriminalised, the authorities hope that young users will shun the dodgy characters pushing harder drugs on street corners. "The controlled sale of cannabis could be the suitable means for preventing drug abuse," Ms Moser asserts.

What kind of grass the youth of Schleswig-Holstein will be smoking is yet to be resolved. The government faces the dilemma of licensing the purchase of top-quality imports handled by the godfathers or allowing local farmers to grow the inferior brand in greenhouses.

"The final word will come from the federal drugs agency, which is expected to pronounce its verdict within a month. But any hope that the decision will be based solely on medical grounds seems forlorn. The debate has taken on a left-versus-right complexion, pitting Chancellor Helmut Kohl's conservative government against the pinkies of the north."

If the scheme is vetoed under pressure from Bonn, the humble hemp could trigger a constitutional crisis. Schleswig-Holstein, one of 16 Länder empowered to run their own affairs, claims it is acting on the instructions of Germany's supreme court, which ruled in 1994 that regional governments should seek new ways to combat hard drugs. But if Ms Moser's proposals go through, the people of Schleswig-Holstein can look forward to a merry Christmas, while the rest of the country will be drowning its envy in beer.



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international

Evil lives on in Bosnia's fields of death

There could be more than mere catharsis behind the exhumation of mass graves, writes Robert Fisk

Behind Mijlko Maric, a Serb woman is sticking snapshots of dead men and women into a scrapbook. Officially listed as "missing", the cruel life with which thousands of Bosnian, Serb and Croat mothers have found cruel comfort since 1992, they are the faces of the corpses in Bosnia's mass graves.

The offices of the exchange commission are informal places. As Serbs wait for clearance to exhume their dead from Bravica, their opposite numbers in the Bosnian government commission want to dig at Srebrenica, Brod, Posavina and Derventer. Unlike the mass-grave exhumers of the Hague War Crimes Tribunal, these men will hack through the ice and permafrost of mid-winter to find their bodies.

"We had to go to Ozren three times to get our dead," Mr Maric said. "The first time, the Muslims had not been informed by the Nato armies that we were coming. The second time, we reached the place and walked for hours up... Mount Palanjak. And on the top, we found 22 of our men on the very peak. They were all soldiers and all had died in their trenches. They were still there, exactly where they had been killed. Animals had eaten parts of them but we examined them technically and put 17 of the remains that we had finished with in black body-bags with numbers attached."

At 37, Mr Maric is the senior Serb police forensic scientist in northern Bosnia, a thoughtful man who married the week the Bosnian war started and who lets you know he neither participated in nor approved of the dreadful deeds done to the Muslims and Croats by Serb militias. Not that he has much time for the men on the other side of the old front lines which he crosses in the company of the international peace-keeping (I-For) forces. His second visit to the dead of Mount Palanjak was brought to a sudden halt.

"I-For told us that Muslims in a nearby village were blocking the road and were going to cause trouble. We had to leave the bodies there and walk the six kilometres back down the mountain. The Swedish I-For troops took us back to Banja Luka on a different road. There were then high-level negotiations between the two sides for a month. At last, they let us go back again. We never expected what we would find. When we got to the top of the mountain, the site was horrible. The bodies we had examined had been taken out of the body-bags and scattered all over the top of the mountain. A number had been burned. Our experts saw... that the remains of one body, still lying on a stretcher, had been booby-trapped. A fuse from an anti-tank mine had been connected to it. If we had lifted the



The mother of a Bosnian soldier praying at his grave in Sarajevo yesterday, as the nation marked its 'day of the dead' Photograph: AFP

erate the thought that so much wickedness created his grisly work?

"In the war, there was complete madness. People were uncontrollable. We don't have anybody to blame." It was sincerely meant, though one had to dispute the issue of "blame". There was blame and evil and the men who did the Devil's work still live in Bosnia, in the Serb Republic, in Banja Luka, only a few hundred metres, in one case, from the office in which Mr Maric is talking to me.

And what, one wondered, did the eternal exhumations of Bosnia prove? True, relatives could grieve over real bodies, though only after learning of the foul nature of their death. But was there a political purpose behind the exhumations? The truth must be revealed and acknowledged. The Bosnians must not forget. But I remembered a Serb woman who recalled the mass graves of the Second World War which the Serbs had opened not long before the recent war began in ex-Yugoslavia. "I used to ask my family why the Serbs were opening up these old mass graves back then," she said. "Was it to prove the Croats were bad? Or the Muslims? ... And I remember telling my family just before this war: 'They are opening up these old graves so that they can pour more blood into them.'"

stretcher, we would all have been killed. It was getting dark and we abandoned everything." Mr Maric and his men returned the following day, only to find the corpses had been further disturbed. For fear of more booby-traps, they were forced to drag each body across the mountain with hooks. Many

were in pieces. "We defused the mine but then we found other bodies had been heaped together and burned. The skulls had been destroyed, so we could not use dental records or identify the dead. There were six bodies burned beyond recognition. Now we are asking for the exhumation of 48 more

sites. At this rate, it will take months, years." When Mr Maric exhumed a mass grave at Glamoc, he found 108 bodies - one of them, of a Serb colonel, was stolen by Croats on the night after the first exhumation, he says. "They obviously want an exchange with some of their dead who were senior men, so they have taken that corpse hostage. But I was very shocked when I found that of the remaining 107 remains, several were of women ... What were these old women doing in a mass grave with dead soldiers? Why had most of them been shot at close range?" Forensic papers say that most

though not all - of the Glamoc bodies had their skulls smashed in with a blunt object. If this is true, it was yet another war crime - and one for which the Croats will surely not be held to account; it was they who buried the Serb dead of Glamoc in an area they had captured. So how can Mr Maric tol-

Students take to streets over Milosevic's poll sham

Tony Barber
Europe Editor

Thousands of Serbian university students staged pro-democracy protests in Belgrade yesterday as public pressure mounted on President Slobodan Milosevic and his ruling Socialist Party. Chanting "Red Bandits" and "The Students Have Risen", more than 10,000 students demanded that the authorities reverse their decision to annul opposition victories in municipal elections in Belgrade and other cities.

Anti-government demonstrations

have taken place every day in Belgrade for the past week, with thousands of people massing on the streets despite snow, sleet and rain. They represent the most serious outbreak of political unrest in Serbia since early 1991, before war erupted in former Yugoslavia.

Mr Milosevic, a former Communist who maintains tight control over the army, police, bureaucracy and state television, scarcely seems in danger of losing power. However, in what may prove to be a sign of worse troubles ahead, one of his most important former political allies, Dobrica Cosic,

announced last Saturday that he was siding with the opposition. Mr Cosic, a former president of rump Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), told demonstrators: "I call on the regime to hand over power and not to defend it by all means. The time has come for new people, new ideas and new policies."

Although the Socialists control the federal Yugoslav parliament, the opposition Zajedno (Together) coalition shocked the authorities on 17 November by winning municipal elections in Belgrade, Kragujevac, Nis, Novi Sad and other towns. However,

Socialist-controlled electoral commissions and courts then methodically annulled the results and ordered new rounds of voting.

The final straw for the opposition was a court ruling last Sunday which stripped Zajedno of its majority in the 110-seat Belgrade city council. Only last Tuesday, official results announced by the electoral commission in Belgrade showed that Zajedno had won 60 seats.

If allowed to stand, the results, would have given Serbia's non-Communists their first taste of political power, albeit at a local level, since

the Second World War. But Mr Milosevic was determined to deny the opposition the chance of using Belgrade as a base from which to challenge his autocratic rule.

Serbian opposition leaders are disappointed that Western governments have not been more explicit in condemning Mr Milosevic. Western countries held him largely responsible for the outbreak of the 1991-95 wars in Croatia and Bosnia, but gradually came to regard his co-operation as vital in making sure that peace, however fragile and unsatisfactory, returned to the region.

The leader of the opposition Serbian Renewal Movement, Vuk Draskovic, expressed frustration with the US and West European countries last weekend, saying: "They refuse to see that the worst sort of crime is being perpetrated here: a crime committed by the state."

Another opposition leader, Zoran Djindjic, said: "We have been brought to a dramatic situation in which all citizens are becoming aware that the regime in Serbia cannot be changed by elections and legally, but only illegally, by uprisings, strikes, violence."



Milosevic: Determined to keep power at any price

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Gays under pressure in Belgium's moral backlash

Nobody around the Place Fontaines has anything good to say about Oliver T. He must be one of them - that they admit. But they didn't know him. All they know is that by naming Eli Di Rupo, the Belgian deputy prime minister, as one of his "clients", this fellow prostitute has broken the strict code of silence which is enforced here on the street.

He has encouraged a backlash against gays in general and damaged the male prostitution business. Police patrols have increased, and Oliver T, who is revealed to be a waiter called Oliver Trusnach, has scared people away from his central Brussels square, where trade is normally brisk from 3pm onwards. It is then that men start leaving offices, shops, factories, ministries, embassies, and stop off, briefly, at Place Fontaines, before making their way home.

"He is a fool, that guy," said one young man, who called himself Jean. "We are discreet. We never talk." He would not say how old he was. Tall, with dark curly hair, hands stuffed in the pockets of his jeans, it was hard to tell if he was 16 or 26, as he stood there on a street corner, under a statue of the Virgin, on the soaring bulk of Notre Dame du Bon Secours. But then nobody this week seemed to know how old Oliver T was either.

In spite of the threat to the government should his allegations prove true, and in spite of all the pages of lurid allegations printed in the Belgian press, not even the police have bothered to establish whether Oliver T was under 16, the age of consent, when he allegedly had sex with the Deputy Prime Minister. And nobody seems to care.

Oliver T is a "victim" - whatever his age - and a new, and potent symbol of moral corruption at the heart of the state. For nearly three months the country has been in shock, following the revelations of the sexual abuse, torture and murder of young girls, carried out, according to the charges, by a known paedophile, Marc Dutroux. For three months Belgians have demanded

explanations for how such horrors could have been allowed to happen, and then covered up for so long by bungling police and judges.

Initially, people displayed sorrow, while angrily attacking the Belgian establishment. Simultaneous revelations about a series of political corruption cases, and new evidence in the unsolved murder of André Coole, in 1991, then Deputy Prime Minister, deepened the shock. Now, however, all that is left is the anger. Belgium seems determined to find the "guilty man". The "moral" right is on a new crusade.

The case of Eli Di Rupo, an openly gay politician, who admitted he has used male prostitutes but denied his partners

have been under-age, has stoked the fires of moral outrage. The gay community all over Belgium is on the alert. Political leaders of the extreme right Vlaams Blok party and the conservative Catholic parties are targeting them, they say.

In the moral confusion, gays fear what the new sanctification of "the family" and "family values" will mean for them. Proposed new gay-rights laws have been shelved. The gains of 30 years are being rolled back, say liberals. Mr Di Rupo, son of an Italian immigrant, is a member of the Francophone Socialists - the party which has been most exposed in recent corruption scandals. The liberals claim the allegations against Mr Di Rupo were calculated to discredit the

Francophone Socialists in order to bring down the centre-left coalition government.

And yet the Di Rupo case has nothing to do with the Dutroux atrocities. There is no evidence to suggest Mr Di Rupo at any stage had any responsibility for the Dutroux inquiries or could have been associated with a cover-up. All the youths he may have had sex with, whatever their age, were clearly "victims".

But their tragedy should not be confused with the tragedy of Julie and Melissa, the eight-year-old girls left to starve in a dungeon by Dutroux. He murdered and abused women and girls. "Suddenly in Belgium we are not talking about murders of young girls any more," says Peter Sioen, a psychologist and expert on male prostitution. "We are not talking about political corruption. We are only talking about gays, prostitution and the age of consent."

Since the Dutroux atrocities came to light in August, Belgium has found moral corruption everywhere. The papers have been full of revelations about paedophiles and other depravities, which previously this society preferred to keep hidden. Brussels is a place where any kind of sex is on offer at the right price. Female prostitution is here for all to see, parading the seedy streets around the Gare du Nord or the wealthy boulevards around Avenue Louise. Brussels, like any big city, has a large gay community, and male prostitution has always been widespread, although, as Jean would say, it is "more discreet".

The client "profile" shows most of those visiting the prostitutes are family men leading double lives. Politicians, diplomats, priests are among figures regularly identified by researchers, openly approaching the youths of the Place Fontaines.

While Oliver T's revelations about Mr Di Rupo may have emptied the streets for now, the prostitutes still working here believe the rest will soon be back. "Business will be good again," says Jean, as a dark limousine purrs around the front of Notre Dame du Bon Secours.



Confronting corruption: Prostitution flourishes in Brussels as it does in most cities, but police are showing a new vigilance

All power to Europe's dictator

Vote in Belarus kills democracy

Phil Reeves
Moscow

The President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, yesterday crowned himself the victor in his campaign to acquire autocratic powers after claiming to have won an overwhelming majority in an illegal referendum.

Government officials said that 70 per cent of the electorate supported his proposals to change the constitution, although that figure will not be taken seriously by many outside the former Soviet republic, as the poll was riddled with flaws.

Undeterred by international criticism, the 42-year-old President yesterday made clear that he intended to act on the referendum which gives him *de facto* control of the constitutional court, the electoral commission, and greater influence over a new two-chamber parliament. It also extends his term by two years.

Although his move is the death-knell for Belarus's fledgling democracy, there were few initial signs that it would meet strong resistance either at home, where the streets were quiet last night, or abroad. Even if it wanted to intervene, the West has few levers with which to control the unpredictable President, beyond continuing not to invest in the shattered, state-dominated economy.

Russia appeared equally reluctant to get involved any deeper than it already is. Moscow has avoided outright criticism of Mr Lukashenko, not least because it does not want to encourage his foes in parliament to make any moves which threaten the republic's stability, its main priority in the region. The Kremlin, overwhelmed by its own problems, has no desire to be drawn into an expensive crisis on its neighbour's turf.

Nor is the Russian leadership in a rush to support parliamentarians who refused to approve last week's Moscow-brokered compromise deal in Belarus, or the embarrassment of Boris Yeltsin who prematurely hailed it as a "great

victory". Yesterday the Kremlin insisted that the failed deal had helped avert unrest.

Last night Mr Lukashenko, a former Soviet collective farm director who has a sprawling security apparatus at his disposal, appeared to hold most of the cards. He said he hoped to introduce the changes by Christmas, pointing out that it would be "very hard" for his parliamentary opponents to insist the referendum was illegal, given his "overwhelming" majority.

But his opponents were not lacking in evidence. Among the flaws in the poll were the President's use of the mass media to bombard his ten million population with propaganda supporting his case, whilst excluding the views of his opponents from the airwaves.

When the head of the electoral commission, Viktor Gonchar, raised irregularities in voting, which began two weeks ago, the President fired him, even though his post is a parliamentary appointment. Mr Gonchar yesterday condemned the result as a "fantastic" fake. Independent election monitors from the European Parliament found more than 1,000 violations in the poll which allegedly had an 84 per cent turn-out. Mr Lukashenko has also ignored a ruling by the constitutional court which said the referendum was advisory only.

But it was unclear what his parliamentary opponents, isolated and facing powerful security services, will now do. Denouncing the vote as a "farce", the speaker of parliament, Semyon Sharshak, called for an international effort to "prevent a dictatorial regime from consolidating itself in our country".

That will not occur. Moves by MPs to impeach the President may continue in Belarus's constitutional court, but Mr Lukashenko is unlikely to pay heed to its findings, which he had repeatedly ignored before. The other options, such as a parliamentary sit-in, à la Moscow 1993, are equally unlikely to persuade Belarus's new dictator to change his ways.



To the victor, the spoils: Alexander Lukashenko at a press conference yesterday when he claimed overwhelming support

Photograph: AFP

Communists protest at Chechnya pull-out

Phil Reeves
Moscow

The Kremlin was last night trying to defuse a political storm after its agreement to withdraw all its remaining troops from Chechnya prompted allegations that Russia's war there achieved nothing beyond a massive loss of life.

Infuriated by what they see as an admission of defeat at the hands of the Chechen separatists, Mr Yeltsin's Communist opponents are threatening to start

impeachment proceedings, although they have almost no chance of success under the constitution.

The Kremlin announced that it was withdrawing the last two brigades from the republic before elections are held there in January. Although many Russians have welcomed the end of hostilities in Chechnya, many, including senior figures in the "power" ministries, vehemently oppose total withdrawal, arguing that that would leave an integral part of Russia entirely under the control

of the separatist leadership. The Kremlin officially opposes Chechnya's secession, but complete troop withdrawal would mean its main influence over the region would become economic.

The leader of Russia's Communists, Gennady Zyuganov, yesterday accused Mr Yeltsin of treasonably plotting to break up the Russian Federation. He said an emergency meeting of parliament on Friday, called to discuss Chechnya, should discuss impeachment and a vote of no confidence.

Russia's Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, flew to Paris for two days of talks on economic relations and said Russia would honour debts run up by the Tsarist government and later reneged on by Soviet Communists, though he said details had still to be worked out.

The creditors, many of whom live in France, are claiming some £20bn. Asked if he intended to finalise an agreement to repay the debts while in France, Mr Chernomyrdin said: "We will, because we are Russia. We will pay all our debts."

UN to let Iraq sell oil for food

David Osborne
New York

The long-delayed agreement to allow Iraq to export limited quantities of oil to fund the purchase of food and humanitarian supplies appeared to be close to implementation last night, following word from Baghdad of its willingness to abide by strict conditions laid down by the United Nations.

Emerging from hastily arranged talks in the UN Security Council, the US Ambassador, Madeleine Albright, confirmed that Boutros Boutros Ghali, the Secretary General, "is ready to go forward with the implementation of 986". If no additional hitches arise, the first Iraqi oil to come on to the market since the 1990 Gulf War could start flowing in weeks.

"This is good news for the people of Iraq and for the people of the United States," Ms Albright said. "For the last two years, my government has been working to make sure the people of Iraq can be given humanitarian assistance".

Initial authorisation of the deal was given by the UN Security Council last April under Resolution 986. It is designed to give the impoverished Iraqi population partial relief from the economic trade embargo imposed on the country after the Gulf hostilities.

The implementation of the agreement, outlined in a separate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was put on hold, however, after Saddam Hussein intervened in a conflict between Kurdish factions in northern Iraq, provoking American military action against the country in early September.

Yesterday's breakthrough came with the delivery of a letter from the Iraqi government to Mr Boutros Ghali agreeing to all of the conditions of the memorandum. An exact date on when oil will start moving will be set once agreement is reached on a pricing formula.

Under 986, Iraq will be allowed to sell \$2bn (£1.2bn) worth of its oil over six months. The sale of its oil, principally through a pipeline into Turkey, and the importation of food and medical supplies will be overseen by UN monitors.

Billion unemployed add to global feel-bad factor

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

The much-talked about British "feel-bad factor" is a global phenomenon, with workers throughout the world experiencing deteriorating employment conditions, according to a report released today by the International Labour Office, an arm of the United Nations.

Nearly one billion people, approximately 30 per cent of the global workforce, are out of work or under-employed, the study says.

The reduction in job opportunities is attributed to lower growth rates in industrialised countries since 1973 and the failure of most developing nations to recover fully from the economic crisis of the early 1980s.

The long-term unemployed have been "evicted" from the world of work and there is increasing "casualisation" of millions of jobs.

The report condemns those who believe in the inevitability of "jobless growth" - where the economy grows but employment stagnates.

It also takes issue with the idea that present rates of unemployment constitute a "natural and inevitable outcome of market forces".

Michel Hansenne, ILO director-general, contends that despite increasing worldwide competition, the present jobless figures are neither politically nor socially sustainable.

The study attributes predictions about the "end of work" to "unwarranted extrapolations

from dramatic episodes of corporate downsizing, ignoring compensatory job creation elsewhere in the economy".

Mr Hansenne said: "Abandoning the goal of full employment means lowering social expectations at a time when the world economy is becoming more integrated through trade and investment flows. These forces have the potential for spurring higher rates of economic growth and job creation and thus higher levels of well-being and social justice."

Politicians are told that the aim of full employment, suitably updated, should remain as a principal objective of economic and social policy.

In a passage which will find more favour among the dirigiste governments of Continental

Europe than Conservative Britain, the paper calls for institutional mechanisms for moderating wage inflation. Pay-bargaining periods should be synchronised, economic predictions made of the basis of a "consensus" and there should be "social pacts" between employers, workers and governments. Ministers should also encourage profit-sharing and tax-based incomes policies.

The ILO argues against labour market deregulation as a means of reducing unemployment. While recognising some regulations need reforming, there should be no "blanket presumption" that such rules are invariably sources of rigidity and that deregulation is automatically the optimal solution.

Galicia turns on Europe

Elizabeth Nash
Santiago de Compostela

Nationalism in the north-west region of Galicia is the fastest growing political force in Spain. Once a marginal grouping of extremist leftwings, the Galician Nationalist Block (BNG) - working class, left-wing and fervently Euro-phobic - doubled its support in March's general elections, and next year's regional polls could vault it into power.

The Block's leader, Xosé Manuel Beiras, 60, has the thick-set rugged beauty of his remote homeland, wild silver curls and a Celtic scowl that could have been plucked from Braveheart's army. Of prosperous Galician stock, he is an economics professor at Santiago university. In 1972, he wrote what became the nationalists' bible: *Economic Backwardness in Galicia*. He became a regional MP in 1985.

He is also an accomplished political agitator whose explosive oratory has dynamised the region's dispossessed fishermen and small farmers. Long the scourge of the right-wing

Nationalists claim EU has destroyed productive sectors

Manuel Fraga, Galicia's Prime Minister, is subtly shifting tack with the aim of supplanting him. Having made his name as a rowdy spoiler, he is now presenting himself as an alternative.

"Nationalism in Galicia has always been on the left," he said, leaning on the bar of the region's elegant parliament building. "It's never been conservative because unlike Catalonia or the Basque Country, there was never a Galician bourgeoisie. We never had any capitalist development to speak of, we're a peripheral, dependent economy. And that's why we never had influence in Madrid."

He talks of internal colonialism, dropping the names of mildly renowned Marxist economists, with the ponderous fluency of a 1968 revolutionary-turned-academic. Then he thumps his fist and his words tumble forth in a torrent.

"The European Union is the

economic instrument of big irano-national capital. It destroys regional productive specialities and imposes its own international division of labour. When we opposed entry, all the other parties called us troglodytes, catastrophists who wanted to hide Galicia behind a wall, but after Spain entered, people began to suffer sector by sector and they realised we were right."

He glared with intense blue eyes and heaved on a cigarette. "In a peripheral region like Galicia, the EU has destroyed practically everything and created nothing. Shipbuilding, deep-sea fishing, cattle farming, dairy farming, and small industry, all destroyed. We've lost our crucial productive sectors."

This, he says, is why the BNG's support is spreading from working class and small farmers to include traders, teachers, professionals and industrialists. And why the Block is stealing support from both the

conservative Popular Party, and from "soft, de-cafeinated" socialists. Some members favour full independence, he says, but not through armed action.

Support for the PP in Galicia, Spain's most conservative region, has fallen steadily since Jose Maria Aznar formed his minority PP government in Madrid. Galicians see the Catalans and the Basques benefiting most, because Mr Aznar's needs their support to rule, and sense their own region marginalised again. Galicia is to hold regional polls next autumn, but Mr Fraga, undermined by surveys predicting he will lose his majority, is being pressed to call them sooner.

Mr Belas leans forward and rolls out pearls of *realpolitik*. "If the PP loses their absolute majority in the next [regional] elections, they have no allies. So automatically the Socialists and the BNG have between them an absolute majority. We want a deal with the Socialists as the only way of coming to power, otherwise we'd be supporting a right-wing minority government, and that would burn us for 20 years."

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international

OJ denies receiving 'enraging' message

Tim Cornwell
Los Angeles

On the witness stand for a second day, OJ Simpson yesterday denied ever receiving a phone message from his girlfriend that his accusers say helped send him into a murderous rage.

The continuing cross-examination of Mr Simpson in his civil trial, the first time he has been forced to answer questions publicly, turned to his conflicting accounts of the day when his ex-wife, Nicole, and the waiter Ronald Goldman were knifed to death.

Mr Simpson is being sued for damages in a wrongful-death case brought by the families and estates of Nicole Brown Simpson, his wife and lover of 17 years, and her friend Mr Goldman.

On Friday Mr Goldman's family lawyer, Daniel Petrocelli, took Mr Simpson through the history of his stormy relationship with Nicole. He ended by accusing Mr Simpson, in a dramatic series of quick-fire questions, of driving to her house and of murder.

"Absolutely not true," Mr Simpson said repeatedly, but he was visibly shaken.



Restrainted: OJ Simpson, on the stand again yesterday

Mr Petrocelli turned yesterday to the details of the murders on 12 June 1994 and the aftermath.

The confrontation between the two men became quite physical, with Mr Petrocelli standing at times only two or three feet away from Mr Simpson and jabbing his finger at him.

That day, it is claimed, Mr Simpson was angered that Nicole had coldly ignored him at a dance recital given by their young daughter. And he was told in a phone message from his girlfriend Paula Barbieri, a model, that she was ending their relationship.

Looking sober and restrained, Mr Simpson denied picking up Miss Barbieri's message, contrary to cell-phone records showing he called his message service twice. He has admitted, however, that he repeatedly tried to reach Miss Barbieri's own phone that day.

"The reason you tried to get in touch with her is because you were feeling alone, true?" Mr Petrocelli asked.

"That's not true," Mr Simpson replied.

"You blamed Nicole for feeling alone, sir, didn't you?"

"No."

Mr Simpson has no witnesses who saw him between about 9.30pm and 11pm that night, the time in which his accusers allege he drove to Nicole's house in his white Bronco, slipped in by a side gate, and carried out the murders.

Mr Simpson, 49, did not answer the bell when a limousine driver arrived to take him to a flight to Chicago. The driver, Allan Park, testified that Mr Simpson said he overslept. In later interviews, Mr Simpson has variously said that he was in the shower, chipping golf balls on his front lawn, napping, and packing.

significant shorts

Bombers hit at Algerian referendum

A bomb exploded at a bus shelter in Berroughia, a town south of Algiers, as 500,000 members of the security forces began voting on a draft constitution that would bar Islamist parties from elections. The security forces said one man was killed and 13 wounded by the blast as the country prepared for the referendum on Thursday on constitutional changes.

Reuter - Paris

Peking to try more activists

The Chinese plan to try three democracy activists for distributing pamphlets inspired by the collapse of the Soviet Union, a rights group said. The trial indicates Peking's crackdown on dissent is "growing more and more intense", the New York-based Human Rights in China said. Shen Liangqing, Ma Lianggang and Huang Xiuming have been told they will be tried on charges of counter-revolutionary, or anti-government, propaganda and incitement.

AP - Peking

New Thai PM in a hurry

Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, a former army commander, was sworn in as prime minister, just in time for a state visit by President Bill Clinton. He took the oath of office at home, a sign of rushed formalities aimed at ensuring he meets Mr Clinton during the first state visit by a US leader since Richard Nixon's in 1969. Mr Chavalit's New Aspiration Party won most seats in elections to the House of Representatives on 17 November and he formed a coalition of 221 seats in the 393-member chamber.

AP - Bangkok

East Timorese Nobel bishop in 'dog' quote row

The Nobel Peace Prize laureate Bishop Carlos Belo accused the German *Spiegel* magazine of making up and attributing to him negative comments about Indonesian rule in East Timor. The reported remarks provoked street protests in Jakarta. Bishop Belo denied saying East Timorese had been treated like "scabby dogs" since Indonesian troops invaded the former Portuguese colony in 1975. "My interview has been heavily manipulated and seriously distorted."

AP - Dili

Ceausescu banger bombs

An old car that once belonged to the wife of the Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu fetched less than £1,200 at auction. Elena Ceausescu gave the Renault sedan to family members shortly before the 1989 uprising in which she and her husband were shot. It later changed hands repeatedly and last belonged to police in the Transylvanian city of Brasov, who organised the auction.

Reuter - Bucharest

Jews to 'attack' Swiss secrecy

The World Jewish Congress said it planned to "attack" Swiss bank secrecy in search of the unclaimed wealth of Holocaust victims. The former US Federal Reserve Board chairman Paul Volcker, heading a commission investigating Swiss banks' co-operation with the Nazis, was briefing a WJC meeting on commission strategy. The preliminary search is to last six months and be followed by an entire audit of 450 Swiss banks, which will take another 12 months.

Reuter - Oslo

Hillary strains at the leash

John Carlin
Washington

Now that President Clinton is free of the burden of re-election, one of the questions intriguing Washington is whether he will finally let his wife out of the White House attic.

Politically sterilised over the past two years, after the polls and the focus groups showed the electorate preferred a passive First Lady, Hillary Clinton has suggested in an interview with *Time* magazine that she may play a "formal" role in shaping US welfare policy.

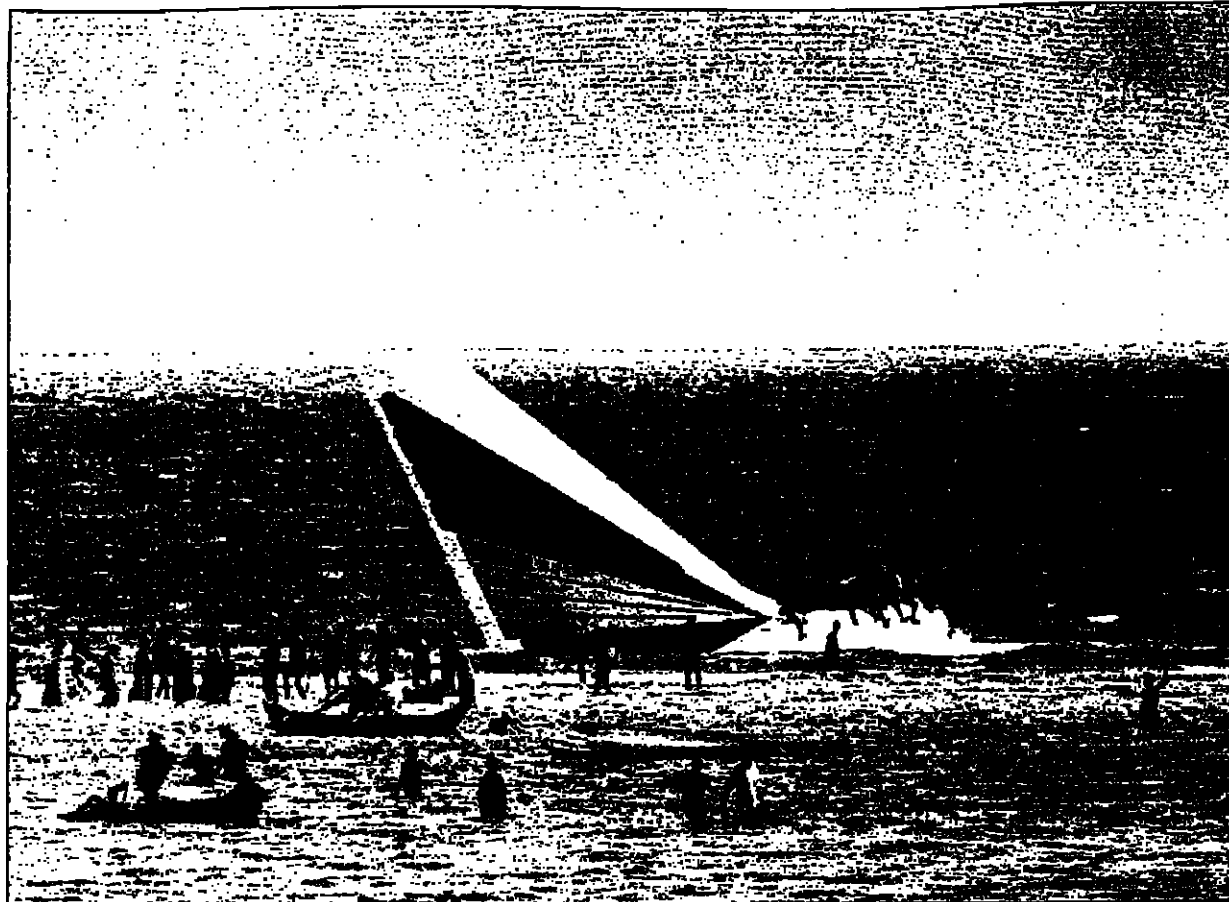
"I intend to speak out about welfare reform," she says in this week's issue of *Time*. "If there's a formal role that would make sense in terms of reporting to the President," she added.

That is exactly the role played by Mrs Clinton's heroine, Eleanor Roosevelt, whose one consolation during a troubled marriage was her husband's readiness to shape policy on the strength of her observations on the plight of America's poor.

Mrs Clinton has made no secret of her desire to emulate Mrs Roosevelt, but when President Clinton signed a Bill in the summer ending Franklin D Roosevelt's 60-year legacy of guaranteed government aid to poor American families, Mrs Clinton stood by her man. She bit her tongue and stuck loyally to the script demanded by Mr Clinton's re-election strategists.

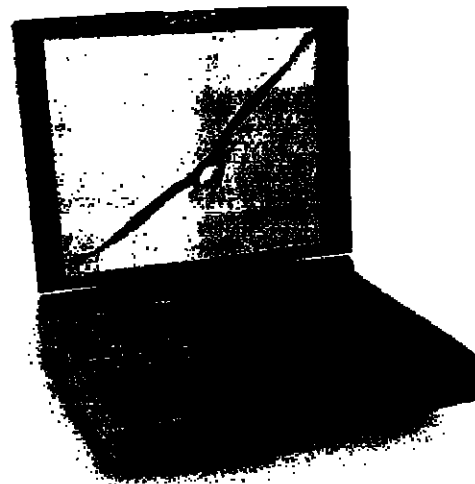
For the accepted wisdom among Washington's electoral professionals was that Mr Clinton would lose in 1996 if he were still perceived as the hen-pecked husband. The hint in the *Time* interview suggested a woman who feels she has played the dotting spouse for too long and is straining to break free.

Mike McCurry, chief White House spokesman, maintained: "I'm not aware that there is any formal role planned for the First Lady." But it could be that allowing Mrs Clinton to be herself - intelligent, active, socially concerned - is a "damage" the President no longer feels necessary to control.



Deadly waters: Bodies were yesterday still being pulled from the wreckage of the hijacked Ethiopian airliner which crashed into the Indian ocean in the Comoro Islands last Saturday. Four of the survivors have since died, bring the death toll to 127. Two men arrested as suspected hijackers may have been innocent passengers

Photograph: Reuter



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Chinese children are roped in – just to make them jolly good sports



Pupils pull their weight during a tug of war at a sports day in a school in Peking yesterday. The Chinese government is attempting to emphasise athletics in educational establishments in an attempt to produce a fitter nation

Photograph: Greg Baker/AP

Andrew Gumbel
Rome

Italy's judicial system, responsible for felling an entire political generation in the early 1990s with its anti-corruption investigations, yesterday turned its sights on the incumbent Prime Minister, Romano Prodi, as prosecutors formally requested his indictment on charges of corrupt management of the country's state industries.

The charges arise from the transfer of a food production company from state to private hands in 1993. Mr Prodi, who was head of Italy's giant state holding company IRI at the time, is accused of fixing the sale of a large package of shares in

the company by offering it to a politically well-connected private concern at a cut-price rate.

The news came as a nasty surprise to the government since Mr Prodi is generally considered one of the few honest figures from the Italian establishment of the 1980s and early 1990s.

Its timing was also unfortunate, coinciding with the appearance of rifts within the governing coalition as the country struggles to qualify for European monetary union with a major package of austerity measures.

The case will now be considered by a preliminary magistrate who must decide whether to order Mr Prodi to stand trial. A date for the preliminary hearing has yet to be set.

Judicial inquiries have a habit of turning into political dynamite in Italy. A probe into bribery and tax evasion prompted the resignation of the media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi as prime minister two years ago, while a smear campaign between rival factions in the judiciary provoked the former anti-corruption magistrate Antonio Di Pietro to walk out of the government two weeks ago.

First indications suggested, however, that Mr Prodi was not running into immediate trouble. His coalition partners immediately expressed their solidarity, while the opposition showed

little interest in making much political capital out of the incident. "Requests to send people for trial seems to be turning into a national sport," said Gerardo Bianco, leader of a left-wing Catholic party close to Mr Prodi. Speaking to business leaders in the northern city of Udine, Mr Prodi said that his own honesty was not in question. "I will demonstrate... the rectitude of our actions," he said. "And as I have always had faith in the judiciary, I don't have any problem."

The affair could yet prove to be a festering sore in the side of his government, however. The investigation into IRI, although prompted by the complaint of a small shareholder in the food company Cirio-Bertolli-De Rica, was actively encouraged by Mr Prodi's political rivals after he launched his candidacy for the premiership in February 1995.

The company that bought Cirio-Bertolli-De Rica, an obscure southern firm called Fisi, subsequently sold part of it on to the Anglo-Dutch giant Unilever – a company to which Mr Prodi was acting at the time as an adviser.

It may in the end be easier to criticise Mr Prodi as a weak, rather than criminally culpable, manager. He himself looks back on his time at IRI with mixed feelings, describing the experience as his personal Vietnam.

Sartorial sabotage at Apec forum

Richard Lloyd Parry
Subic, the Philippines

Each year at the end of their annual summit, the leaders of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) forum demonstrate their unity of purpose in a cute photo opportunity. After their final consultations, dedicated to free trade in Asia by 2020, they caper for the cameras in the national costume of their host country.

In Indonesia in 1994, they dressed in batik shirts. Last year, in Osaka, they wore Japanese sports jackets. This year, in the Philippines, the 18 men, including President Bill Clinton, President Jiang Zemin of China, and the Japanese Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, chose black trousers and traditional Filipino barong smocks. All except one. Alone among his peers, the trousers of the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamed, were a delicate shade of grey.

This fashion detail was not a coincidence (Dr Mahathir pulled a similar trick with his batik shirt, which was subtly different from everyone else's). It was a tiny but calculated act of symbolic sabotage which epitomises the tensions at the heart of Apec. For all their enthusiastic expressions of consensus, the Apec leaders are far from united. And this year the gaps dividing them have been more obvious than ever.

Subic, the site of a former US naval base and the venue for this year's summit, was accessible only by boat or aircraft yesterday, the roads from Manila being blocked by demonstrators. Under the slogan "Junk Apec", left-wing groups harried the forum all week, accusing it of "service to a corporate agenda at the expense of the human rights, dignity and well-being of the peoples of this region".

The protesters believe free trade will make the rich richer, but do no favours for the poor. Although he would never admit it, they have an unlikely sympathiser in the authoritarian Dr Mahathir.

The focus of this year's negotiations was a proposed agreement on global trade in information technology (IT), four-fifths of which is conducted in Asia. For weeks before the summit, US officials were making it clear they expected a clear commitment on IT: across-the-board abolition of tariffs by 2000. In early drafts of the leaders' declaration, they appeared to have failed. But after personal lobbying by Mr Clinton, the final version promised to "substantially eliminate tariffs by the year 2000".

Hardly had the leaders

Cracks begin to show in world leaders' polished presentation

changed out of their barongs, however, when the cracks began to show. "Substantially eliminate," explained the US trade spokesman, Jay Ziegler, "is tradespeak for zero". But within a few hours, Dr Mahathir was pooh-poohing the agreement. "If the US wants to reduce tariffs to zero, that's fine with us," he said. "We feel that if we're not ready, we will not have to submit to the deadline."

Beneath the fussy detail lies an intriguing philosophical conflict. Among Apec members, Dr Mahathir is the most aggressive apostle of "Asian values", a believer in strong government, social discipline, and a Confucian emphasis on hard work and hierarchy rather than on Western ideals of democracy and human rights. On a practical level, in common with the Filipino protesters, he is suspicious of Apec, fearing it could become a Trojan Horse for the domination of his country's markets by first world, US business.

Next year's summit will be held in Vancouver. The dress code has not yet been decided, but Apec watchers will be keeping a close eye on Dr Mahathir.



At talks: Ryutaro Hashimoto (top) and Mahathir Mohamed



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ELECTRONICS

obituaries / gazette

Sorley MacLean

"The 'full-time' professional poet is not for me and never has been. If I have to do it, I brood over something until a rhythm comes as a more or less tight rope to cross the abyss of silence. I go on it, as far as I can see, unconsciously." So Sorley MacLean described his procedure for writing a poem. Poetry was too serious a matter to be considered as a profession.

When he was born 85 years ago on the island of Raasay, between Skye and Wester Ross, the Scottish Gaelic oral tradition was still strong and both the maternal and paternal sides of his family contained notable singers and pipers. Most Gaelic poems were sung and MacLean grew up absorbing a huge repertoire of songs accumulated over hundreds of years. Luckily, for us, he had no gift as a singer; he became a writer, he often said, because he could not sing. His memory for songs, however, was extraordinary, as it was for genealogies and historical material.

On to this Gaelic oral stem was grafted a modern European intellectual awareness, wide-ranging and profound. In school in Portree on Skye he was taught English poetry from Chaucer to Arnold and French literature, Racine and Corneille, and poetry from Villon to Verlaine. He confessed to a preference for Latin rather than Greek, explaining himself: "I think I had a Gaelic prejudice against the frequency of the 'th' sound in Greek." In Edinburgh University his degree in English under Herbert Grierson enlarged his knowledge of that literature and encouraged him to read contemporary continental writers and philosophers.

This blend of the Gaelic oral tradition and the written European one had not happened before in the way it happened with him and it can obviously never happen again. The mixture gives a special feel to his poetry. One is reminded of sailing conditions and, on coast where the conditions of the water are affected by local winds, tides and geographical features, but also by the repulsive effects of storms far out in the deep ocean. In MacLean's poetry, mingled with the surface subject and rhythms is an under-swell of deeper connections. Sometimes at his

public readings and in conversation, his eyes would be squeezed tight shut, his body would sway and he would wait in a silence or repeat a word as if waiting for the under-swell to push his thought to completion. Once at a reading of his poems the silent pause was so long that his friend Norman MacCaig was heard to murmur: "I thought he was going to read them aloud." No one who saw MacLean perform could feel that poetry was unimportant or that his poems did not rely on some kind of inspiration, some breathing through of a power.

Events from past centuries in the history of his people – and MacLean did think in terms of his people – were vividly present to him, partly, I suspect, because he had heard them recounted repeatedly in story and song from his earliest years. In conversation he could melt into other times so completely that you were not entirely sure in what sense he was still in the same room as you. Some of his poems are difficult for us because we need to have these temporal elisions spelt out more carefully. This temporal bi-location goes beyond the allusiveness and inter-textuality we have come to expect in Modernist writing after Eliot, Pound, Joyce and MacDiarmid.

Singhandedly, MacLean wrenched Gaelic poetry out of a largely backward-looking and elegiac mode and into a confrontation with contemporary actualities on a global scale. His own moral turmoil, for example at the time of the Spanish Civil War, forced this confrontation into his poetry: "Would beauty and serene music put from me the sore frailty of this last cause, the Spanish miner leaping in the face of horror and his great spirit going down untroubled?"

Nuclear submarines surface in his poetry, the stink of Auschwitz is included, and one occurs with titles such as "Id, Ego and Super-Ego". His poems first appeared in 1940 in *17 Poems for Ed*, a small pamphlet shared with Robert Garioch, but the first major publication was his *Dàin do Eimhir* ("Poems to Eimhir") in 1943. Between these dates he had fought in North Africa and been seriously wounded. His war poems re-

main a revelation, conveying the brutality of battle, the futility of individual suffering but his fierce detestation of Fascism and the inevitability of sacrifice.

At the same time he was trying to write a long poem called "The Cuillin". It was never to be finished, although parts of it were eventually salvaged and included in his 1989 *Collected Poems*. His intention was grandly or ironically described as being to write "on the human condition, radiating from the history of Skye to the West Highlands to Europe and what I knew of the rest of the world". Perhaps it is not surprising that he discontinued the project. None the less, the poem does point to a central feature of his work: the centrality of place, of a geographical orientation.

In 1938 he had moved from Skye to Mull as a teacher. Mull, homeland of the Clan MacLean, had been particularly devastated by clearances of its people by landlords in the 19th century. Sorley MacLean found the depletion of population and the ruin of communities almost unbearably painful. His local-historical empathy extends to an understanding of loss and exploitation elsewhere and always with a bitter awareness of the discrepancy between the natural beauty and the human cruelty.

In what eternity of the mind will South America or Belgium be put with the sun on Skye? Urrin and its ridges cut in snow? Heartbreak is about the mountains and in the woods for all their beauty, though the restless sportive blood rages triumphantly in the young.

Love, war, the natural world, loss, exhilaration and heroism are explored with passion and poetic ingenuity.

In his career as a teacher, eventually as headmaster in Plockton in Wester Ross, in his experiences in political struggles and in the Second World War, MacLean came to recognise that we learn little from our mistakes and suffering.

The broken bonds and the razor are in the fat and the boy in spite of Auschwitz and Belsen. He admired courage greatly but recognised that courage is not a monopoly of the well-intentioned. He had seen courage exhibited by Nazis as he had seen it in his militant socialist heroes James Connolly in



MacLean: 'What is once, always will be'

Photograph: Christopher Barker

Ireland and John MacLean in Scotland.

His poetry keeps reasserting his understanding of the complexity of human behaviour. His socialism and secularism gave him hope but they didn't provide solutions. He had detached himself from his Presbyterian upbringing when he was in his early teens, but its anguish of individual conscience remained with him.

His *Collected Poems* is not a bulky volume even with his parallel translations (he never published poems in English, only his translations of his own poems from the Gaelic) but it is one of the texts of our century, and not just in Scotland or Ireland where he is so highly regarded. The text will survive, if Gaelic, which he did so much to revive, can survive. But the marvelous human being is gone. Of the people I have met, I

feel most honoured to have known Sorley MacLean. His generosity and humanity were restorative to all who encountered him. A man of the utmost seriousness, he could be, of all people I have known, the most funny. A wonderful raconteur whose mannerisms and idiosyncrasies were enchanting, he carried his vast knowledge and sense of history with grace and always he was asking about you. He was a man of stern pride but profound humility.

His fame among non-Gaelic grew after Iain Crichton Smith brought out a collection of translations, *Poems to Eimhir*, in 1971. MacLean's own translations now accompany his *Collected Poems*. It is a pity that the Nobel Committee did not accept the valuation of his poetry and cultural contribution made by many of his fellow poets in many countries. However, he was granted recognition in the later part of his life with many doctorates in Britain and abroad, the Queen's Medal for Poetry in 1990 and more invitations to read than he could keep up with.

With Sorley MacLean's passing into the "abyss of silence", a generation of the Modernists and particularly of the Scottish Renaissance has come to an end. In the world of the imagination which he augmented, he is still here like the "dead" figures in his masterpieces, "Hallaj".

Between the Lines and Faintly the road is under mud, moss and the girls in silent bands go to Clachan as in the beginning, and return from Clachan from Suisnich and the land of the living each one young and light-stepping without the heartbeat of the tale.

Alasdair Macrae

Sorley MacLean inspired a generation of younger writers, writing in Gaelic, Scots or English, to be confident that our traditions, to be confident that our languages and historical culture, however much they might seem marginalised, oppressed or local, have an international currency, writes Joy Hendry.

When MacLean took the decision to write not in English but in Gaelic, he knew that it would have huge implications for his career as a poet. But he took that decision because he knew what he had to say could be best said in Gaelic, whatever the personal consequences. His decision has implications for Scots too: these languages, and all languages, have a unique, untranslatable quality. They are born out of the experience of a people, and have grown and developed in a way which articulates and expresses their character. I remember MacLean on television defending this decision by saying simply, "What is once, always will be."

Ten years ago Raymond Ross and I edited a volume of *Critical Essays on Sorley MacLean's Work*; it was then the first critical volume to appear on any modern Scottish poet apart from Hugh MacDiarmid. In the introduction, Seamus Heaney spoke about MacLean's work of having "the force of a revelation". MacLean's poetry sings with the force of all those great songs of his own Gaelic tradition which he loved so much, but vibrates too with a modern sensibility in advance of his own time.

Yet, only 20 years ago, his work was largely unpublished. In 1975, while his great long poem "The Cave of Gold", had been published in sections, in English, nobody was willing to publish the Gaelic. I immediately offered to publish it in *Chapman's Literary Magazine*. In the same year, I was part of the Scottish contingent at the first Cambridge Poetry Festival. We all went along to hear him read to this international audience to whom he was unknown. They had never heard anything like it before: a poet so unafraid of the music and emotive power of words.

There are many stories about MacLean: he was so much himself that he was naturally and unselfconsciously eccentric. As

headmaster at Plockton he was notorious for sitting down to work out the annual timetable only a day or so before term started. He was so democratic that he would consult each pupil in a class about whether to open a window. On the other hand, he was ruthless in his keenness to defeat the opposition. He was famous for his otherworldlyness; on one occasion in a hotel in St Andrews he wondered why he couldn't get the telephone to work: the telephone was in fact the room hairdryer.

MacLean's ordinary speech was virtually identical to his delivery of poetry, giving each vowel a length which can only be described as "extra-o-rdinary". His phrases and sentences were punctuated by terrifying pauses. This made interviewing him, for radio especially, a nightmare. One (print) interviewer tried to document the pauses by giving them a star rating of one to five. His five-star pauses were formidable.

At readings, Sorley MacLean could be seen, with Norman MacCaig, Iain Crichton Smith, Hamish Henderson and others, happily sitting amongst the younger poets, swapping stories, opinions, comments, enjoying their company. He gave support to younger writers, without ever asserting his authority. Thanks to his benevolence and that of others of his generation, we became like an extended family.

Our first instinct on the news of his death was to cancel *Chapman's* "Times of Destiny" event, arranged for Thursday at the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh; it was intended partly as a post-85th-birthday tribute to MacLean, a celebration of Gaelic and Scots, Scottish writing and music, urban and rural, bringing together many figures from the Scottish arts – Hamish Henderson, Iain Crichton Smith, Angus Macneil, Angus Peter Campbell, Sheena Blackhall, the Folk Divas, Kenna Campbell among others. But we have decided to go ahead. It will be a very emotive occasion.

Sorley MacLean (Sorley Mac Gill-Eain), poet: born Osgaig, Raasay 26 October 1911; married 1946 Renee Cameron (two daughters, and one daughter deceased); died Inverness 24 November 1996.

Michael O'Hehir

Michael O'Hehir was the voice of Irish sport for almost half a century.

Best known for his vivid commentaries on GAA Gaelic football and hurling matches and horse racing, he was head of sports programmes at Radio Telefís Éireann (RTE) from 1961 to 1972, while he also had a brief spell as manager of Leopardstown Racecourse. Before that, he was racing correspondent for the *Irish Independent*, a position he held from the late 1940s until the early 1960s. He also produced the Irish Form Book for the Turf Club – a task his son Peter now performs – from 1975 onwards.

Born in Dublin in 1920, Michael O'Hehir began commenting as a schoolboy at the tender age of 18. He was given a five-minute microphone test during the first half of a GAA league match, and the director of broadcasting at RTE, Dr T.J. Kiernan, was so impressed with him that he allowed him to commentate on the whole of the second half. Two months later, in 1938, he made his first broad-



O'Hehir: commentaries

cast when he covered the All-Ireland football semi-final between Monaghan and Galway. On Sunday afternoons in the 1940s and 1950s people gathered around the radio to listen to him. He covered virtually all major GAA matches from 1938 to 1985, when illness prevented him from covering his 100th All Ireland final.

One of his two most memorable commentaries was on the 1967 Aintree Grand National, and that was the year of the horse

Foinavon, when the 100/1 rank outsider emerged from the havoc of fallen horses and riders at one of the railway fences and went on to win the race. O'Hehir spotted every horse that came to grief at that fence, and immediately called Foinavon as he came away from the obstacle all on his own. That was his most outstanding performance in 25 years of covering the Grand National for the BBC.

His second great commentary, on the visit of President John F. Kennedy to Ireland in 1963, showed him to be a man of unique talent. He was in the United States later that year when Kennedy was assassinated and was asked by RTE to cover the funeral. Without the resources available to others, he gave an emotional commentary lasting almost five hours. He described that commentary as the most demanding of his career.

The previous year he had been asked by ABC television in the US to cover the Washington D.C. International horse race at Laurel Park, and following the Kennedy funeral he

was offered a full-time job in American broadcasting. He preferred to stay in Ireland. In 1972 he became manager of the newly designed Leopardstown Racecourse, but, after finding that this position conflicted with his radio and television work, he left a year later to continue writing and broadcasting on a freelance basis.

Shah was born in British India in 1924, the son and heir of Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah of Sardhana, and belonged to a distinguished Hashemite family. Their best-known 19th-century forbear was Jan Fishan Khan, a notable warrior and Sufi sage.

As a young man Shah often accompanied his father on his many diplomatic missions, thus acquiring the grasp of cultural divergencies needed for application of the Sufi maxim, "Right place, right people".

In 1955 Shah decided to make his home in England, though he continued to travel widely both in the East and in the United States. The *Sufis*, published in 1964 with an introduction by Robert Graves, was not his first book in English, but it was the first to attract critical acclaim. It was followed by a series of books, including

The Way of the Sufi (1968) and *Neglected Aspects of Sufi Study* (1977), making Sufi classical masters accessible to Western readers and bringing to their attention the teaching story as an instrument of self-development. This initiative offended some traditional Orientalists, who persisted in regarding Sufis as belonging to an Islamic sect rooted in the past and having little contemporary relevance.

When in 1967 Graves published his new translation of Omar Khayyám, challenging Edward Fitzgerald's refusal to treat the Persian Khayyám as a Sufi poet, critics saw a chance to attack Shah, despite the fact that he had no hand in Graves's version. Those interested in Sufism as a force in the modern world rallied to Shah's support and 24 of them, drawn from both East and West, compiled a Festschrift in his honour, *Sufi Studies, East and West* (1973).

In three of his books of tales, *The Exploits of the Incomparable Mulla Nasrudin* (1966), *Tales of the Derivatives* (1967) and *The Subtleties of the Inimitable Mulla*

la Nasrudin (1973), Shah resurrected the Eastern joke figure Mulla Nasrudin, "the Mulla who is no Mulla, the fool who is no fool". Shah founded the Octagon Press, which published much of his later work, including two books, *Darkest England* (1987) and *The Natives are Restless* (1989), in which he traced affinities between the English and Afghan peoples. In all, he was author of more than 30 books, translated into 12 languages, including Russian. His enthusiasm for cross-cultural studies led in 1965 to the establishment of an educational charity, the Institute for Cultural Research in London, where he became Director of Studies.

Shah's many activities in the West were never pursued at the expense of his contacts with the Indian sub-continent and Afghanistan. These ties came to the fore with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and he set up Afghan Relief to provide medical and other aid to refugees. No consideration of danger or

ill-health could dissuade him from entering occupied Afghanistan, as well as working in the refugee camps. His experiences gave lively colour to his novel *Kara Kush* (1986).

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Shah: 'Right place, right people'

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Robert Cecil

Sayed Idris Shah, writer: born 16 June 1924; married 1958 Kashfi Kabirji (one son, two daughters); died London 23 November 1996.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

BARKER: Guy Golding, on 17 November 1996, at home in Battle, East Sussex, after an immensely brave struggle. Husband of Judy, father of Ian, Hilary, Rachel and Kate, and grandfather of Benjamin, Jessam, Rebecca, Joseph, Jonathan and Natasha. He donated his body for medical research. Memorial service, Thursday 5 December, 12.15pm, at Bodiam Parish Church, and afterwards at Bodiam Castle. Donations enquires, telephone 01424 36386.

KANTOROWITZ: On 23 November, aged 79, Roy Herman Kantorowicz, Professor Emeritus, University of Manchester, ARIBA, FRSA, after a long illness. Beloved husband, father and grandfather.

SEPE: Susan (née Andrews), 20 November 1996, died peacefully at home. Much-loved wife of Benedict and mother of Elinor and Rosamund. Memorial service at St Mary's Church, Thame, on 5 December 1996. Rather than flowers, please send a donation to the Imperial Cancer Research Fund or Michael Sobell House, Oxford.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, Memorials) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at 66.50 a line (VAT extra).

Birthdays

Maj-Gen Sir John Acland, farmer and brewery director, 68; Professor Margaret Boden, philosopher, 67; Mr Paul Burnett, disc jockey, 53; Sir Alan Dalton, former chairman, Devon and Cornwall Development Company, 73; Miss Frances Dee, actress, 89; Lord Forte, president, Fortis, 88; The Earl of Goswick, Chairman, Arts Council of England, 57; Mr John Selwyn Guzman, MP, Secretary of State for the Environment, 57; Professor Sir Harry Hinsley, former Master, St John's, Cambridge, 78; The Most Rev Richard Holloway, Bishop of Edinburgh and Primate of the Scottish Episcopal Church, 63; Mr John McVie, rock musician, 51; Lord Moore of Lower Marsh, former MP, 55; Miss Joyce Quin MP, 52; Mr Charles Schultz, cartoonist, creator of "Peanuts", 74; Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, President, Falkland Islands Trust, 75; Miss Tina Turner, rock singer, 58; Mr Keith Vaz MP, 49; Mr Des Walker, footballer, 31; Mr Norman West, MEP, 61; Mr Peter Wheeler, rugby player, 48.

Anniversaries

Births: Sir Mark Aurel Stein, archaeologist, 1862; Dr Cyril James Cusack, actor, 1910. **Deaths:** John Loudon MacAdam, inventor of road surfacing system, 1836; Harold Harmsworth, first Viscount Rothermere, newspaper proprietor, 1940; Cyril Vernon Connolly, critic, 1974. On this day: New College, Oxford, was founded by William of Wykeham, 1379; to commemorate the harvest of 1623, the first national Thanksgiving Day was held in the United States, 1789. Today is the Feast Day of St Basilus or Basil, St Conrad of Constance, St John Berchmans, St

Leonard of Porto Maurizio, St Peter of Alexandria, St Silvester Gozzolini and St Siro.

Frances Lang and Mark Brand

A celebration of the lives of Frances Lang and Mark Brand will be held at St Lawrence Church, near Guildhall, London EC2, on Thursday 28 November, at 4.30pm.

Luncheons

Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Mr Jeremy Huntley MP, Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, hosted a luncheon held yesterday at the Garrick Club, London WC2, for Mr Waldemar Dabrowski, President of the Polish State Foreign Investment Agency.

Dinners

The Speaker: The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh attended a dinner given by the Speaker yesterday evening at Speaker's House, London SW1. Among those present were:

The Prime Minister; The President of the Council, Mr Paddy Ashdown MP; Mrs Margaret Bottomley MP; Mr Tony Blair MP; Mr Robin Cook MP; Mr Donald Dewar MP; Mr Michael Forsyth MP; Mr Alan Gould MP; Mr Michael Heseltine MP; Mr Michael Morris MP; Mr Gillian Shepherd MP; Mr John Wicks MP; Mr Nicholas Brown MP; Mr Angela Browning MP; Mrs Kate Hoy MP; Mrs Jane Kennedy MP; Mr Jacqui Laid MP; Mr Margaret Mowlem MP; Mr Giles Radnor MP; Mr George Robertson MP; Mr Charles Smith MP; Mr Jack Straw MP; Mr John Sykes MP; Mrs Ann Taylor MP; Mr David Trimble MP; Mr John Whittingdale MP; Mr David Wigg MP; Canon Donald Gray; Mr Peter Jennings; Mr Donald Lucas; Mr Nicky Bates.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen holds an investiture at Buckingham Palace, the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of York, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Gloucester, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Kent, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Cornwall, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Devonshire, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Somerset, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Northumberland, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Norfolk, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Bedford, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Argyll, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Atholl, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Buccleugh, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Hamilton, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Galloway, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Montrose, Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke of Argyll, Prince and Princess of Wales, and 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Drawing a map of tomorrow's Britain

Not all opposition to new house-building in the shires should be dismissed as Nimbysism. There is some selfishness, of course, in the reaction of those who want to freeze their villages and parishes at their present size, as if they had been placed on England's greensward immaculate and fully-formed and had not waxed and waned over the centuries. But we are the guardians of green land for future generations, too. And some "Nimbys" truly believe where you live does affect how you behave, how you are. Good environment makes you better. It is a belief shared by left- as by right-wingers. It is a foundation of the housing reform movement. Among country dwellers the belief often takes the form of improvement by proxy - townsies are thought all the better for being able to visit the countryside where they can experience the lifestyle vicariously.

Yet there is that sour selfishness, too: "we got here first, push off". Nor has every attempt to improve people by giving them better surroundings worked. Successive schemes of new, higher-quality public housing have failed - lack of money and associated cultures of deprivation pretty quickly ensure the walls get graffiti covered. Urban squalor has very little to do with the physical quality of the city, much more to do with jobs and incomes.

But the basic idea that a good envi-

ronment is uplifting retains an intuitive appeal. It helps explain why John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, is beating the alarm drums as he juggles with the fate of the 4.4 million - the number of extra households projected between now and the end of the second decade of the new century. Where will these houses go? What sort of communities - harmonious or loutish - will they spawn? His concern is more than callow party advantage. The direct electoral effects of planning decisions are generally slight. True, Mr Gummer wants to minimise trouble from green-belt Conservatives; that means putting the people in the (less Tory) cities. But he also has a larger ambition. He has seen the light. As a conversion, it was Green not Pauline. It took place on the road to the Earth Summit in Rio.

Since then he has been genuinely concerned about sustainable growth. Concentrating growth in cities has distinct environmental advantages (such as stopping the spread of the light pollution obscuring the heavens as effectively in the country as in towns). So Mr Gummer offers a ratio for accommodating the new housing that would put 60 per cent inside existing urban areas.

Such precision is deceptive and probably unnecessary. Planning authorities were making provision for growth long before. What is new is that the

Department of the Environment has made a song and dance about a specific plan for the nation's new housing - presumably to fashion a rod with which to beat the backs of Hampshire and Gloucestershire councillors and get their allocations of land for house-building raised.

So far so sensible. What has yet to dawn fully is the realisation that town and country planning as it has been practised lately won't do. The way forward is planning - the realisation that nobody but government can juggle all the elements in growth, jobs, transport, subsidy regimes, and produce a coherent map at the end of it. It is a hard lesson for a Government which for 17 years has extolled market solutions and damned the capacity of government to do much except get in the way.

This then is John Gummer's political dilemma. A wet who successfully disguised his pragmatism behind tough moralising and hard politics, he has lately become a missionary to the unenlightened, trying to convince his Cabinet colleagues about the need for intervention.

Deciding that homes should be built in the city rather than the country is

largely meaningless unless the Government plans and shifts money to make it happen.

The Government's model only works if private housebuilders are attracted to city sites. Private-sector urban development is possible - though the only real examples we have at any scale are still those of Ebenezer Howard's original garden cities at Letchworth and Welwyn. But the evidence from, for example, the millennium projects, let alone the redevelopment of docklands in London and Liverpool, says that private enterprise will only work in partnership with public, lubricated by big spending.

Private housebuilders get a lot of flak - for their laziness, for the poor quality of their housing designs. But ultimately their prices and qualities depend on land values. They can only build well inside the urban envelope if they get public support. That means not just rethinking the structure of urban government (new corporations? business development districts?) but the very philosophy of urban governance.

There will be more households. They will find a place somewhere. The choice is between untidy piecemeal development - local battles, an urban victory here, a rural defeat there - and planned growth. Maps won't do it. Yesterday Mr Gummer got half-way to expressing something like an urban

vision for our times, a new flowering of cities - dense, yes, but exciting, job-providing, good places to live and work at all ages. Tired Tory hostility to planning stopped him there, though: going further means revitalising government itself.

Stop arguing start listening

The Classic FM-isation of Britain continues. From the New Year, a new classical-crossover chart is to be launched, in response to complaints from those whose work is too "classical" (ie it sells too little) to figure on the pop charts, but is hugely more popular than most classical music.

When Bryn Terfel - a great singer of mainstream opera repertoire by anyone's test - produces a "greatest hits" album, where does it fit? Artists such as Lesley Garrett, following in the footsteps of Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, start recording show tunes, but do it with their own special class. What is going on? Does this disarming heterodoxy spell an end to standards, the musical equivalent of soap opera? No. It is glorious evidence of cultural spread. As the best artists, from Shostakovich (jazz composer) to Elvis Costello (string quartet enthusiast) know, music is music is music.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

How to lift families out of poverty

Sir: Your look at the many adverse effects of poverty, particularly on health, was timely and essential ("Dickensian diseases return to haunt today's Britain", 25 November). Oxford has shown that some of our citizens live in the poorest conditions outside the developing countries; this is hardly surprising when you learn that two-fifths of kids in my constituency have never had income-earning parents.

Any serious look at improving the health of our society has to start with the causes of poverty, unemployment and a poor environment. I often liken the NHS to a harassed and increasingly desperate police officer who spends so much time dragging people out of the canal that he has no time to walk up the bank and arrest the hooligans who keep chucking them in.

The Liberal Democrats advocate a radical and comprehensive "helping hand" programme which includes: taking the lowest 750,000 people out of tax altogether, to be paid for by a new 50 per cent top rate of tax on earnings over £100,000 and streamlining the benefit system by means of a Benefit Transfer Programme to encourage employers to provide jobs and training for the long-term unemployed.

John Major regularly boasts that the NHS is treating more people than ever before. While welcome to a degree, this is hardly the ringing endorsement of a more equitable and healthy society. Sometimes social redistribution can increase wealth for all. Let us hope that Mr Clarke remembers that today (and Mr Brown tomorrow).

SIMON HUGHES MP
(Southwark and Bermondsey, Lib Dem)
Liberal Democrat Health and Welfare spokesman
House of Commons
London SW1

Sir: You are correct to point out (leading article, 25 November) that to solve poverty in today's Britain we must all take responsibility.

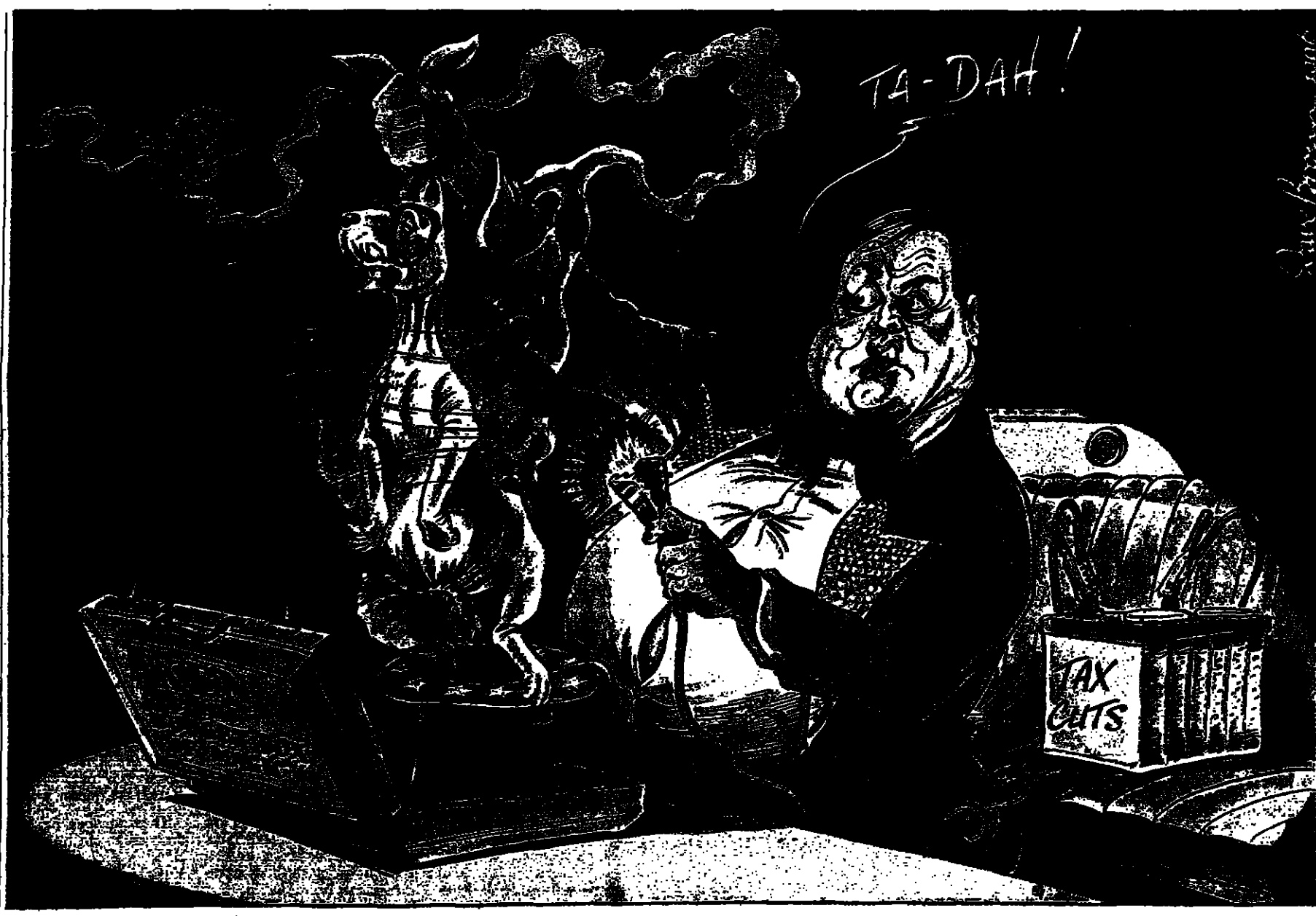
Last week's Halton Anti-Poverty Forum launched its first public charter for the relief of poverty in our community. To redress the level of inequality that leads to poverty, we committed ourselves to a number of joint actions by both statutory and voluntary agencies.

Too much time and effort is spent by each agency working in isolation without recognising their interdependence. For example, ill health caused by poor diet can be resolved by increasing a person's income through an effective benefits take-up campaign. With so many benefits unclaimed, would it not be a better ultimate use of resources to demand a local benefits agency office actively seeking claimants rather than encouraging local gossip through a "fraud" telephone line?

The Rev DAVID R FELLIX,
Chair, Halton Anti-Poverty Forum
Runcorn, Cheshire

Sir: Polly Toynbee's report on the cuts imposed by the East London and City Health Authority (25 November) identifies a problem at the heart of the Government's drugs strategy.

Many of the projects affected by the authority's decision are early intervention programmes which reduce drug problems. A Department of Health



The horror spills into Uganda

Sir: Much suffering in recent days has descended upon Uganda's Bakonzo tribe among the southern foothills of the Ruwenzori (the Mountains of the Moon) and on the northern shore of Lake Edward, as a result of the armed incursion from Zaire, reported by Mary Braid on 15 November.

The Zairean raid appears to have been related to the flood of refugees from the Rwanda war zone, and to have been led by Islamic activists known as *tabliss*.

The Ugandan government, however, has allegedly used the raid as a pretext to "arrest and torture some hundreds of Bakonzos", according to a *cri du coeur* reaching me, on the grounds of their collaboration with the invaders, and to institute a "witch-hunt" of other Bakonzos, all seen as opponents of the election of President Museveni's NLM candidates in recent parliamentary and forthcoming local elections.

I am assured that the victims of current reprisals are in no way collaborators with the invaders. Rather, they are Bakonzo patriots committed to the peaceful advancement of Bakonzo recognition within Uganda. A tribe of half a million (with whom I have been closely associated for over 40 years), the Bakonzos are the natural guardians of the most remarkable tropical biosphere of the planet, the Ruwenzori highlands.

TOM STACEY
London W8

Sir: Reading a traveller's account of trade between Africa and Britain in the early years of the 19th century I came across a list of imports and exports. Items imported into Britain from Africa included elephants' teeth, ostrich feathers, beeswax, camwood, ebony and ivory. And Britain's exports? Cotton goods, cutlery, gunpowder and guns. *Plus ça change?*

JENNY BALFOUR-PAUL
Creddon, Devon

Impotent on the EU sidelines

Sir: What is the difference between a Tory government rate-capping elected local governments in the UK and the imposition of fines on overspending national governments by a European legislature? If the answer is related to the undemocratic nature of the European Commission then perhaps we should be debating the issue of the power of the European Parliament first, and issues of financial controls to achieve improved economic stability later.

Of course, if the profile of the European Parliament is raised, provincial (national) politicians such as Kohl and Major may feel that they will lose influence. Perhaps they are thinking of the fortunes of previous regional governments such as those of Wessex, Mercia or Normandy (and do we miss them now?).

If the striking lorry drivers are affecting British trade and transport companies, this is precisely the type of action that should be raised at a European level and the French government requested to put its house in order ("French asked to help British truck drivers", 25 November), but with John Major placing Britain firmly on the sidelines and losing influence with its unconstructive attitudes, why should they take any notice?

DAVID VINCENT
Southampton

effectiveness review earlier this year even cited Californian state research which found that every \$1 invested would repay \$7 to the taxpayer. This was achieved through reducing the drug-related crime which Polly Toynbee also identifies as part of the "finances of addiction".

The Department of Health was commended for commissioning its landmark study. Yet with a 21 per cent increase in the last year alone in notifications of drug addiction for those aged under 21 the effectiveness of the response to rising drug problems rests much more in the hands of those controlling Treasury policy than it does with the volunteers, staff and purchasers of "cheap social programmes".

ROGER HOWARD
Chief Executive
Standing Conference on Drug Abuse
London SE1

Lib Dems wary of Labour deal

Sir: John Sanders ("Lib Dems must seize their chance", letters, 25 November) is quite right about the need to repair the damage done by the Tories. But before he tells us to take our chance, he must prove that the chance is there: in coalitions it takes two to tango.

I find it hard to imagine a common programme which does nothing to revive the economy or to alleviate poverty, and personally I cannot see how a programme which does so is possible until Labour accepts the truth of Paddy Ashdown's remark that "taxes are the subscription charge to a civilised society". Shouldn't Mr

Sanders address his complaint to Gordon Brown?

EARL RUSSELL
House of Lords
London SW1

Sir: Your front-page headline "Liberals revolt over coalition fear" (23 November) and references to "dissidents" and the possibility of "disciplinary" Liz Lynne would have some validity if a coalition or pact with Labour was part of Liberal Democrat thinking.

It is not. Nor could it ever be in a party which, judging by a survey poll of its "online" members earlier this year, was over 9 to 1 against any pacts, coalitions or deals with Labour.

The only references to cabinet places for "two or three" Liberal Democrats in a Blair-led agenda, or to an agreed common platform, have been in your newspaper or on BBC radio and television. Nothing has been said publicly by the party or privately within the party about any such ideas. I am convinced that the leadership's "sources" are close to it is the Labour leadership.

Of course, Liberal Democrats will co-operate with other parties over specific issues where our interests coincide, like electoral reform. The only major - and openly expressed - differences between members on this point are whether we can persuade the Labour party to adopt a fair voting system and how far we can trust them to stick to any agreement reached.

FRANK LITTLE
Neath Liberal Democrats
Pontardawe, West Glamorgan

Sir: The only real puzzle over the warnings given to the Liberal Democrats' leadership by Liz Lynne MP and others is why they should be surprised at their party "coysing up to Labour".

A party that attempts to fuse Liberalism and Social Democracy is bound to find itself in serious political difficulties as "New" Labour becomes increasingly social democratic. Only by emphasising the primacy and urgency of Liberalism, and by acknowledging that a party built on political expediency is bound to be at the mercy of every passing breeze, can the party assert its independence.

Those who, in spite of every difficulty put in the way of smaller parties, maintain the Liberal Party do so in order to ensure that the distinctiveness and importance of the Liberal message is still on offer.

MICHAEL MEADOWCROFT
President, The Liberal Party
London SW1

Clarke take note

Sir: Your leading article of 22 November commented that "most people still believe that taxes, and in particular their own, are too high". Contrary to your implication, there is nothing illogical in this statement. It would be true if the wealthy minority, corporations and perhaps some of the self-employed are not paying as much tax as they might. How silly of me to think this might currently be the case.

PETER MARSHALL
London SW4

'Crash' failed to corrupt me

Sir: When I was a 16-year-old art student, a tutor recommended I read a recently published book. Always willing to suck up to tutors, I did so. A jolly good book it was too.

Now I find that, although I have had sex with the same man for 23 years and only ever knocked one man off his motorbike after 16 years of driving (and managed to stop myself from having depraved sex with him on the roundabout), I cannot go and see the same book. *Crash*, translated on to film ("Film crashes into barrier", 21 November).

I could read the book as a teenager but now I may not be able to see the film as an adult. It all makes perfect sense.

BECKY NUTTALL
Brixham, Devon

Sir: May I thank you for the wonderful photo-sequences on today's front page (25 November) of a rally car crashing, which gave me immense sexual gratification. It is a pity that the pictures of a "lap dancer" in your financial pages last week were so much smaller and not in colour. All the same, it's nice to see you trying to woo back readers who may have defected to less serious newspapers in the price wars of recent years.

DAVID MILLER
Norwich

The local school Blair shunned

Sir: I was disappointed to hear Tony Blair say on *Desert Island Discs* that he could not have looked himself in the mirror in the morning, had he not sent his son to the Oratory School (report, 25 November). As an Islington parent with children attending local schools, does that mean I should not be able to look myself in the face?

Islington Green School, of which I have the privilege of being acting chair of governors, has increased the proportion of children gaining A to Cs at GCSE to close to the national average. Islington Green is a true comprehensive as always envisaged by the Labour Party. I am confident that all Mr Blair's children would receive a good education at his local comprehensive.

JANET PAYNE
London N1

Spare a steel?

Sir: Dr Holmes (letter, 25 November) is wrong in claiming that the magnetism of recent (1992 and after) "copper" coins is due to their nickel content. Recent "copper" coins are in fact copper-plated steel, rather than the solid bronze used previously.

One of the reasons for this change was that the value of the metal in a "copper" coin was beginning to approach the face value of the coin; unfortunately, the cost of producing our coinage is considered commercially sensitive, and the Royal Mint will not reveal it, so I cannot be more precise.

J C BRADFIELD
Edinburgh

interview

Jack Kevorkian is the champion of euthanasia in the US, and Geoffrey Fieger is his mouthpiece – a man who calls himself a crusader for the biggest civil rights issue of the Nineties. Ann Treneman met him



Death's advocate

Death is our last taboo topic. We may shout about sex and drugs and almost everything else, but death is something we still discuss in hushed tones. By the time we start to discuss euthanasia, our voices are at whisper level.

Not so Geoffrey Fieger. He is the man who made Jack Kevorkian, America's Dr Death, famous, and Kevorkian remains happy for his lawyer to do most of the talking.

This Fieger does, with as many expletives and as much offence as possible. "Without me, Kevorkian would be in deep shit," says Fieger. "You would have never heard of him."

These days in America it is hard not to hear of him – even during election week he dominated the news – and the result is that euthanasia is fast catching up with abortion on America's moral agenda.

This week the Voluntary

Euthanasia Society will once again try to spur on debate here with a symposium called "Physician Assisted Suicide: An International Perspective" on Saturday at the Royal Society of Medicine. "We want to raise the level of debate in this country. It is at a very low level here, especially in Parliament," says John Oliver, general secretary of the society.

But what Britain needs to raise the debate is not a symposium but a doctor like Kevorkian who is willing to go public and a lawyer like Fieger who is not afraid to say the unsayable.

On his CV, Fieger lists his hobby as "beating the bejesus out of people in court," and in the end this "hobby" means that he cannot be there to shout about death this Saturday as he is back in the American courts. The topic, though, is one that he has rehearsed many a time, and he couldn't care less if what he has to say is offensive to some.

He sees himself as a crusader, and euthanasia as the civil rights issue of the Nineties. If you are talking life and death, then a few ruffled feathers are nothing, he says.

It is helpful to know two things about Fieger. One is that he spent a year touring England as a roadie for the likes of Arthur Brown of *Fire!* fame; and the other is that before law school, he studied theatre at the University of Michigan. For Fieger, law is the new rock'n'roll, and, at 45, he is still the guy screaming into the microphone.

That the microphone this particular morning belonged only to my tape recorder sitting atop his desk in suburban Detroit was immaterial.

"Kevorkian is standing up for all of us," he raises his voice, then drops it. "If you are so unfortunate to get a disease like ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's disease), you will die a terrible death.

You will be aware of the fact that you are choking to death when you do. Can you imagine me telling you that you have to go through that because I am protecting you from yourself?"

It is incredibly offensive that these people think they are protecting us from ourselves. Unless you are lucky enough to die in your sleep like a bunch of fat old farts do in this country, you will face this issue, either yourself or through your family.

"Nobody – and certainly no government – has the right to tell you when you can take a piss or go to the bathroom or how much suffering you have to undergo when you die. It seems to me that the suffering of a disease is as inherently personal as going to the bathroom. If you can differentiate the two, please explain it to me."

Well, how about the fact that suicide, unlike going to the lavatory, is considered a sin by some? He answers with a snort.

That Geoffrey Fieger is good at talking about death is no accident. Jack Kevorkian has now publicly admitted to helping some 45 people die since his first patient used the "mercy machine" – the device that administers lethal injections – in the back of his Volkswagen van in 1990. His lawyer has defended his right to do so in every case – either to the press or during the three trials – and so far no jury has convicted.

In Michigan, Kevorkian is a folk hero. People say that when their time comes they hope

someone like "Doc" will be there to help them. The establishment – the doctors, the lawyers, politicians and religious right – believe he is dangerous. Some even think he is a serial killer.

Whatever his opponents say, however, Fieger says the opposite even louder. But such passions are only raised in countries like Australia, the Netherlands or the United States, where some sort of assisted suicide is being practised.

Doctors do help patients to commit suicide in Britain, but it is done secretly and there is no figure comparable to Kevorkian here.

Annie Lindsey, from Teddington, west London, who is suffering from the degenerative motor neuron disease, is taking her campaign to the European Court of Human Rights. But when she went to speak to an open meeting at the House of Commons earlier this year, few MPs bothered to attend.

"Pain is simply not the only issue," she said. "Loss of personal dignity and a reducing quality of life are just as important and cannot be controlled."

For instance, what does one do with the bodies? Kevorkian used to leave them in cars in front of the morgue, but now he has started taking them into emergency rooms himself.

Fieger does not find this strange. "If anyone finds that untoward, then what are they doing?" he explodes. "Somebody ought to go to a nursing home and see how people really die. It's not in tubes, it's in bed, and faces soaked with urine, neglected, suffering. And if they think that it is bad to die in a van in a park with clean sheets and people who care about you, then I've got news for them: there's millions of people who are dying quite ignominiously in nursing homes."

The phrase "assisted suicide" is also found wanting. "Nobody is committing suicide. That's 100 per cent wrong. If you think that, you just don't understand."

But, I say, it is assisted suicide.

"I don't care what it's called. It's called sex, it's called making love, it's called rape. They all represent the same physical act, but they are all different. One hand, five fingers, all different. Do you understand what I am saying? This is not suicide. This is a pre-emptive act of not suffering. Suicide is the destruction of one's life. We're talking about the end of suffering here."

It is typical of Fieger that when asked about his own death, he decides to also talk about orgasm.

"Death is for sure a frightening thing. I hate to describe

it like this, but when you reach adolescence and you've never had an orgasm, you're scared of it the first time. It is not a great analogy but the only one in my lexicon of experience of life process."

"Right now, at 45, I'm loathsome of death. I'm fearful. I'd fight every ounce of my being to survive. But there appears to be some point in the dying process when that is no longer true, when suffering becomes so great that the fear of death completely dissolves. When the body prepares for that and when it's not a bad thing, but a good thing."

Suddenly Fieger decides to give a press conference – in 90 minutes – to announce that Kevorkian has appealed to the US Supreme Court (his is one of three cases pending and the court is expected to give a landmark ruling next year).

"Let me tell you something," he says amid a flurry of faxing and giving orders. "I have been on the world stage with this for the past six years. You are looking at one of the experts in the world in disseminating information on this issue... I do it fast!"

That he does, but he also does it with maximum offence. Hitler is often mentioned; disabled people are "quads"; the prosecutor is an "irrational fanatic who is making up the law to pursue his own religious beliefs."

He told the Michigan Court of Appeals judges to stop acting like "squirrels, molluscs and lizards".

A typical Fieger outburst takes place when he talks about Michigan's common law against doctor-assisted suicide. Fieger cannot stand the very idea. But, I say, there is such a thing as common law.

"I don't care! What did the SS say? What did Hitler say about the Jews? There's a Flat Earth society. There are people who say you can read the entrails of owls. That doesn't make it right."

This may be Outrage Politics but it gets people talking. In Britain, the decision in 1994 not to alter the law on euthanasia by the Lords select committee is considered the last word on the subject by many. But here, as in America, polls show that most people would back a change in the law, and the most recent poll by the British Medical Association shows that 46 per cent of doctors would too.

"I can only assume politicians are a different species," says a frustrated John Oliver.

Perhaps it takes a Fieger to prod that species into action. Certainly Kevorkian could not do it without him, though it is hard to imagine that the reclusive 68-year-old is soulmates with the flamboyant 45-year-old lawyer.

Fieger drinks vodka: Kevorkian prefers ginger ale, no ice. But they are devoted to each other, and no money ever changes hands. "If he had done this for money, he would not be successful," says Fieger. "It shows that his aim is true."

But anyone who looks into Kevorkian's "practice" will come away troubled.

It is unclear how he chooses whom he will help to die. Not all are terminally ill. All patients and families must sign statements supporting the death, and the patient's last statement is videotaped.

But errors of judgement have been made, with autopsies on several showing no trace of disease. He has been criticised for attracting depressed middle-aged women.

"Lies and sexist shit," is Fieger's response as he side-steps the particulars. He is equally defensive about Kevorkian's fascination with death and his stated dream of practising something he calls "obituary" at suicide centres where patients who had given permission could be experimented on after dying.

"It's so weird," says Fieger. "We fill up dead bodies with what – some kind of alcohol – and put eggs in their mouths and paint them and display them and call that normal. And we make this some kind of ritual. And we say Kevorkian's weird!"

Well Kevorkian is weird, but he certainly does not need, in Fieger's words, a testicular transplant.

"He is brave," says Fieger, who then declares with a great flourish: "We will win because we are right. This issue is a biological imperative. It is a demographic imperative. People will not be denied."

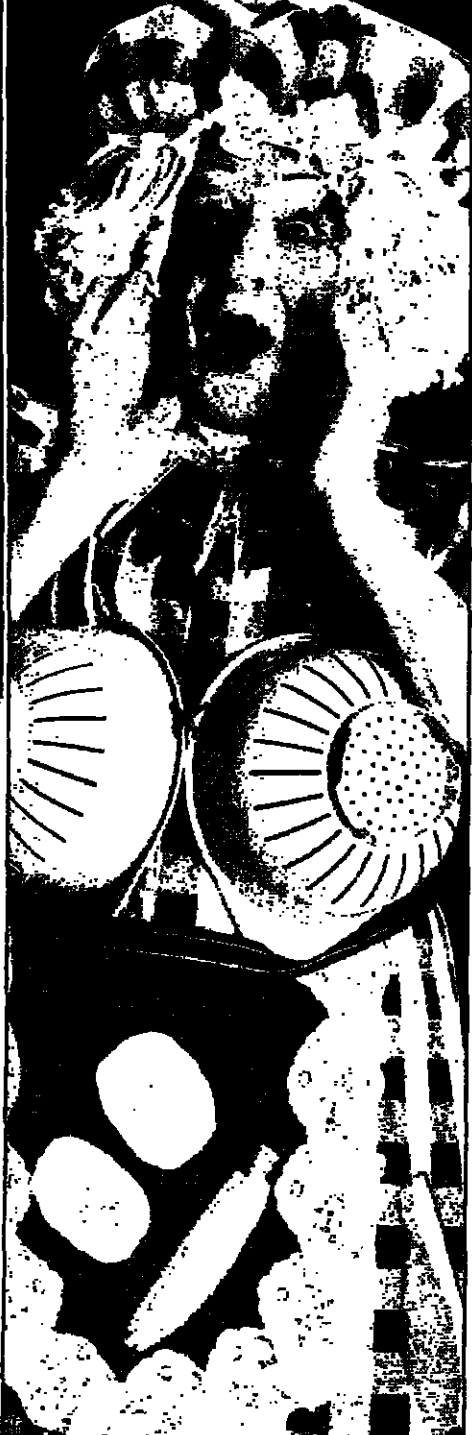
But first, of course, you have to talk about it in voices louder than a whisper.

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Stocking stuffers that expand the brain



Miles Kingston

I have been asking various personalities to nominate books they have been reading recently, and which they would recommend as good Christmas gifts, and here are their hot tips.

Kenneth Clarke
"Well, I have been reading the writings of Nostradamus in order to find out how someone who foretold the future for a living could get away with it. And I must say, I think his style is wonderful

– the mixture of dire warnings and gloomy prognostication together with cloudy predictions and veiled allusions creates an atmosphere in which you have no idea what he is actually forecasting but are still tremendously impressed. Wonderful stuff! I wish I had the courage to get up on Budget day and predict nasty deaths for all those present. To put it another way, if Nostradamus had gone around saying, 'We must put 5p on the price of petrol or perish', nobody would remember him today. Lucky man."

Norman Lamont
"I have been reading the diet book by my ex-colleague Nigel Lawson, but I can't get the hang of it at all."
Sarah Ferguson
"I have been reading John Cleese's book, *Royal Families and How To Survive Them*. Well, it's not actually called that, that's just a joke! And it's not actually a joke, it's someone else's, but it's jolly good. So, no, I haven't actually been reading any books recently, only writing them; yes, I am

engaged on another Budgie book, it's going to be called *Budgie's New Perfume*, in which Budgie the helicopter is chosen as face of the year to launch a great new perfume, it's just about ordinary people doing ordinary things..."
The Pope
"I have been reading the Bible. In many ways it is an excellent book. It is about a group of people who go around the world getting into lots of trouble and who are always calling on their father figure, who in the book is called God, to help them out of trouble. And every time he says, 'If only you had listened to me!' and they say, 'Yes, yes, you are right! Next time we will listen to you!' but they don't and they get into trouble again, so basically that is the message of the book: do what you are told and it will all be all right."

Prince Charles
"Well, one doesn't get much time for reading in my line of work, and you may be surprised to learn that I have to get through a lot of official papers which are thrust at

me by equerries and similar sorts of people who no doubt are only doing their job, so when it comes to actual books I have to be pretty cost-effective about my reading, which means that if I read smaller and shorter books I get through more of them. That's the theory, anyway, and so I was going to get round at last to reading *Small is Beautiful* this year, but I got sidetracked on to rereading some stuff by my old friend Laurens van der Post, and that sort of took care of my spare time for 1996. Next year, maybe..."

Lady Thatcher
"This year I have finally had the time to get round to tackling the *Communist Manifesto* by whoever wrote it, and *Mein Kampf* by Adolf Hitler. All I can say about the *Communist Manifesto* is that it strengthens my belief that no party ever won an election through people reading its manifesto, and all I can say about *Mein Kampf* is that I had never realised what a wet the man was. All words and no action. One wanted to shake him by the

shoulders and say, 'Well, for goodness sake go out and do it instead of just going on about it! Horrible little man. He wouldn't have lasted long in my Cabinet, I can tell you!'"
John Major
"*Widen*."

Paul Gascoigne
"Funny you should mention that, because although I don't do much book reading, I did pick up a book the other day, and had a quick look through it and it was terrifying. It contained a lot of stuff I didn't know about, and which quite frankly gave me a bit of a turn. It was called 'The Laws of Football'! No, just joking actually..."
Mike Tyson
"I have been reading some scripts with a view to maybe doing some performing, acting you might say, and I was very struck with a script passed on to me by my old friend Frank Bruns, called *Dick Whittington*, which is a kind of complicated story but the message seems to be pretty clear, in other words, you can bounce right back if you want to hard enough."

The tactic was wrong, and so was the timing

Richard Ryder, the last Chief Whip, seeing William Cash MP approach him in a Commons corridor two or three years ago, turned smartly through a door only to find it led to a broom cupboard. He hid there until Cash had passed. Dealing with Cash and his fellow obsessives on the Euro-sceptic right would at times try the patience of a saint. It is tempting to see the Government's obstinate refusal to grant their latest demand as simple determination not to be pushed around any more.

But it won't do as an explanation. For this time the sceptics had right on their side in insisting that Parliament should debate the current negotiations on European Monetary Union. They had a fresh cause in their sights a fortnight ago when documents dealing with negotiations on the "stability pact" that will underpin EMU were issued by one of the Commons committees that scrutinises European directives. It had been widely understood – and was explicit in the Maastricht Treaty – that discipline would have to be applied to countries which joined EMU, to ensure that they maintained the balance in their budgets which had qualified them for entry in the first place. Otherwise the credibility of the Euro as a sound currency risked being blown to pieces. But the new issue boiled down to this: could it be that this same central financial discipline might be applied to Britain even if it stayed out of EMU? And could a Britain outside the single currency even face being fined?

If the answer was yes – and the opinion of a lawyer called Martin Howe, much consulted by the Euro-sceptics, implied that it might be – the consequences would be explosive. The Tories who oppose EMU as an article of faith mostly do so for constitutional reasons – that Britain will be handing over the control of its economy to European institutions.

But if this discipline was to apply whether Britain was in or out of EMU then the British political economy would be surrendered to Brussels and Frankfurt anyway. Just as, on a smaller scale, the 48-hour week could be imposed on Britain even though it had opted out of the social chapter, so the economic choice of whether or not to run a deficit would be surrendered even though Britain was not an EMU member. What's more – and this certainly was not lost on the most ferocious Euro-phobes – it would mean the only logical way to avoid such external control would be to leave the EU altogether.

Now this fear – or for some, no doubt, this hope – appears to have been misplaced. Kenneth Clarke eloquently argued in the Commons yesterday that the treaty only required Britain, if outside EMU, to provide information on its own economic plans and performance in a way that would leave its "complete control over economic policy" intact. Even Martin Howe seemed to agree yesterday that the only legal



Donald Macintyre

Refusing to have a debate on preparation for EMU until the last possible moment has blown up in Major's face

obligation would be to "submit a programme rather than to follow a particular economic policy." All that Howe can muster is the rather lame conclusion that such an obligation "imposes strong pressure on us to pursue the policies laid down in the programme."

But that wasn't the point. The sceptics, backed by some of their pro-European colleagues, demanded a debate and were, until yesterday, refused. Yet these were real issues – and certainly worthy of a debate than a good deal of the mind-numbing subjects with which MPs frequently occupy their time. What's more, they went to the heart of public fears about Europe, which extend well beyond a few neo-Thatcherites striking postures for life after a Tory election defeat: that something is being transacted between European governments, including our own, which isn't quite decent to talk about openly.

Even those ministers who now say remorsefully that it would have been better to heed demands for a debate earlier say – perhaps from sheer force of habit – that after all it could have been held late at night when only fanatics and insomniacs would have turned up. Not in front of the children. Only after the watershed.

You don't have to be a Euro-sceptic to see that this argument won't hold. As it happens, the Government had a perfectly sustainable case, as Clarke effectively demonstrated yesterday. There was much less to hide than it had seemed. Indeed Clarke, despite being enemy number one for the sceptics, had made it clear, while not pressing for a debate, that he was quite willing to have one. It is, of course, now impossible to find anyone claiming authorship of the decision not to hold a debate even after a standing committee (last Wednesday) and a select committee (two days earlier) had voted for one. And practically impossible to find someone who doesn't blame someone else. As always, there is a lot of dumping on the whips. But well informed sceptics are convincing when they insist that the decision went right to the top.

The reason is surely a distorted electoralism. The budget, so the strategists argued, would help to concentrate minds on the economy; the one strength the Tories believe they have. To allow anything to get in its way – particularly a public wrangle about Europe – would have been to take the public "off message" in the hideous jargon of the wonks. Also, there may have been a fear that not just the sceptics but Clarke, too, would blow his top. As it happens, he was well behaved, eloquently promising John Redwood to strive for the "copper-bottomed" guarantees on the stability pact that Redwood sought. What happened, of course, was that the row blew up in the Government's face – threatening, precisely, to overshadow the budget. Which is a suitable punishment. For once doing the right thing would have been good tactics too.

Ken Clarke's secret fan club

by Nyta Mann

We are used to the Tories trumpeting the health of the economy and the skills of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but it is a surprise when the political enemy joins in. Though their praise is not nearly as loud as that of the Government's propagandists, if you've been listening closely over the past year you will have heard it. For Labour is home to a growing band of discreet devotees: Ken Clarke's secret admirers.

Among his more open Opposition supporters is a distinguished array of eminent Labour economists. Meghad Desai, professor at the London School in Economics, once economic adviser to John Smith and a former spokesman for the party in the House of Lords, is an outspoken cheerleader for Chancellor Ken: "We've had the best three years of economic growth almost ever, due to a combination of common sense and boldness on the part of Kenneth Clarke. He's been quite brilliant."

John Wells, lecturer in economics at Cambridge and a former Labour adviser, is another unabashed enthusiast: "The man has a degree of self-confidence that Gordon Brown lacks. Brown is probably terribly insecure about his grasp of economics, while Clarke is prepared to follow his intuitions and isn't afraid to stand up to people. He's also a bit more of a Keynesian, too."

Professor David Currie, director of the Centre for Economic Forecasting, ex-Treasury "wise man" and a newly-ennobled Labour peer, also congratulates Clarke: "While I think the interest-rate cut last May was perhaps wrong in hindsight, one has to say that the economy has been well run over the past three years." Gerald Holtzman, director of the Institute of Public Policy Research, a left-leaning think-tank, is yet another Labour figure who acknowledges a job well done. "I'd say I was respectful rather than an admirer, but I give credit where it's due and I give it openly. Clarke was dead right to continue with the fiscal tightening started by Norman Lamont, and in terms of macroeconomic theory I give him very high marks. Up to now, he's done pretty well – though he could always do something disastrous in this Budget."

Economists – even when they are Labour lords – rest their reputations on hard-headed, objective analysis, and



'Gordon Brown is so orthodox that he's going to be awful ... I'd rather have Clarke as my Chancellor, but if you print that, I'll sue'

so tend to be above the party political fray. When it comes to the Parliamentary Labour Party, membership of the Chancellor's unofficial fan club is a more private affair. Austin Mitchell is one of the few Labour MPs devoted (or just plain reckless) enough to admit it. "Oh yes, I am a fan," he cheerfully confirms. "Ken's got panache, and a greater ability to take risks and get away with them than any previous Chancellor, Labour or Tory."

Most MPs only reveal their feelings off the record. "He's done a great job," raves one. The post-election fantasy of another, meanwhile, extends way beyond the standard speculation at Westminster on Lib-Lab co-operation in a hung parliament. "If we win, I'd love for him to stay on as our Chancellor," is his secret wish. "Gordon Brown is so orthodox that

I think he's going to be awful. And Ken's more left-wing than Gordon, of course."

Such closet treachery is not confined to the powerless back benches, either. Take the following blunt response, from a frontbench spokesman when asked if he expects the Shadow Chancellor's handling of the economy to match Clarke's: "No, Gordon doesn't have the economic grasp that Clarke has." Or even this, from a Shadow Cabinet member. "I think I'd rather have Clarke as my Chancellor any day, but if you say I said that, I'll sue."

To some in the Conservative Party, these compliments merely confirm their worst suspicions about Clarke. They mutter similar things: "He's more left-wing than Brown!" You wouldn't know it from the carping by Euro-sceptics and malcontents on the Tory

benches, but in a government that has lurched from crisis to crisis, Ken Clarke stands out as an unalloyed success. Over the past 4½ years, inflation has been at its lowest sustained level for half a century. Unemployment has been falling every month since March 1993, and looks set to drop below two million in the new year. Bumper tax receipts for October have put the Treasury back on track to meet its forecast for the public sector borrowing requirement this year – confounding most observers. Prices are rising modestly, mortgage rates are low, growth looks steady and consumers are spending with renewed confidence.

Less than a year ago, Labour was counting on the economy being a strong card in its favour come election time. Now it is the one thing that may help the Tories to claw back some of

their lead in the opinion polls. If John Major does end up hanging on to power next May, it will be Clarke who won it.

There are other reasons for the secret admiration from Labour. Not only has Clarke resisted right-wing pressure for a slash-and-burn approach to public spending, he has also issued stout defences of the welfare state at a time when doing so is increasingly unfashionable on both sides of the House.

It would be grossly misleading to suggest that the entire Parliamentary Labour Party are paid-up members of the Ken Clarke fan club. Labour's official line is that Clarke has been a disaster, and even some of Brown's backbench critics agree. Roger Berry, a lecturer in economics before he came to the Commons, is one of those who refuse to be impressed. "Clarke's been very clever at disguising the fact that the recovery he's presided over is nothing other than the result of the complete failure of the economic policy the Tories went into the 1992 election with – maintaining the value of the pound within the ERM," he insists. He is right, up to a point, though Berry's critique is somewhat spoiled by the fact that Labour fought the election on exactly the same policy.

In style, Clarke and Brown are chalk and cheese. Brown is buttoned up and grimly intent on maintaining a sober, strictly orthodox approach in order to prove his fiscal rectitude. Clarke is far more at ease: brash, and confident enough to face down all-comers, even the Governor of the Bank of England.

Would Brown have done the same, Labour MPs ask themselves. If he had, would the City react as calmly as it did when Clarke, against all advice from the Bank of England, cut interest rates in May? (The Governor later confessed that Clarke had been right. Even more galling for Labour, the International Monetary Fund singled out Clarke's stewardship of the economy for praise soon after.) No one can know for sure what Brown would be like in office. But neither will they hazard a guess. "I do hope when Gordon is Chancellor he will be as bold as Clarke has been. But I wonder whether he will be," muses Lord Desai.

In the Commons pre-election war of words, the Chancellor can take comfort from the fact that, in their hearts, some of those sitting opposite secretly adore him.

Why I should be stopped from fleeing to suburbia

Nicholas Schoon on a pernicious middle-class exodus

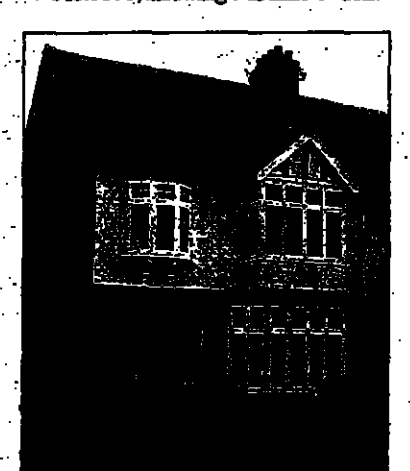
I want to live in the countryside one day. But now I live in the suburbs, with my wife and three children who will probably leave home within the next 15 years and set up households of their own. I imagine that they, like their parents, won't marry and have children until their late twenties or early thirties (if at all). And I want to live to a ripe old age.

I and my family are squarely part of a huge environmental problem: the disappearance of an area of English countryside the size of Greater London, buried under new housing within the next 20 years. That is what is implied by the Government's forecast for an extra 4.4 million households to be formed between 1991 and 2016, even if half of the new homes required are built within existing towns, cities and villages. The population is growing slowly, but the number of households is expected to shoot up by nearly a quarter by 2016. This is because we are living longer, marrying later, splitting up more frequently and are much more likely to live alone. Yesterday the Department of the Environment published a consultation paper about where, in this crowded country, all those homes should go. It agonised over these issues, asked lots of pertinent questions, and in the end committed itself to discussing targets, but not to policies to achieve them.

At the moment, I can't afford my dream country home anywhere near my work in London, nor face the prospect of the extra commuting. So I live in the most suburban of outer London suburbs, a few hundred yards from where the ranks of inter-war semis (just like mine) abruptly give way to Green Belt.

I'd like to live nearer the heart of the capital. We did, for seven years, and we enjoyed it – a small Edwardian terrace, the big and little parks nearby, the bustle and variety and the short journey to work. But when the time came for our eldest child to go to secondary school, we checked the Government's league tables and moved from Greenwich to Brom-

ley, where children get a lot more qualifications. We had no confidence in our nearest inner-city comprehensive and no chance of getting him in the better one a little further away. So like millions of middle-class parents who can't afford or don't want their children to go to private schools, we fled to the anodyne suburbs.



We felt bad, knowing this kind of behaviour makes for inner-city decline. But, as Tony Blair and Harriet Harman tell us, your children come first, and unlike those MPs we could find no way of getting our son into a good inner-city school.

If the Government is serious about stopping both urban decline and ever-growing suburban sprawl across the diminishing countryside, it should have no higher priority than improving schools near the centres of big towns and cities. But this gets only the briefest mention in the housing paper from the Environment Secretary, John Gummer.

Raising inner-city school standards is difficult and expensive. Both central and local government seem resigned to the fact

that few people with money, jobs and children will want to live in inner cities. Yet politicians of all parties wish for the centres to be inhabited by people other than the left-behind poor, in order to keep the urban heart beating.

So they warm to the idea of students, young singles, childless marrieds and old people living in smaller homes in the core of cities. The children of the self-sufficient are to be raised in John Major's "livable green suburbs". Once they grow up, they will move into the city centres to work and study, and it is being suggested that it would be a good idea if their newly alone parents did so, too.

But the parents will probably still want to retire to a cottage in the countryside. And their children, too, will wish to move out of the centre when they have children, unless the schools do get better – and the city streets safer. By the time they do move, there will be numerous big new suburbs for them to live in, in places that are now fields and woods.

This unceasing sprawl does not only erase the countryside, a national asset which most people treasure. Dispersed, low-density "burbs" are hard to service by public transport and they encourage the car culture, with its attendant pollution and congestion.

If we are to slow the outward march of suburbia, people such as myself must be stopped from achieving our dream of country living. The supply of new housing in greenfield sites must be so limited that out-of-town house prices become prohibitive. Meanwhile, homes should be built on derelict and vacant land in the cities, created in the empty space above shops and in out-of-date offices. For once we – the comfortable, middle-class English – know we are fated to raise our families and our days in town, we will make it a fit place to live in. The politicians have to summon the courage to make us give up our dreams and start us planning our un-English urban future.

So many awards, so little to praise

I am inclined to agree with Laurence Olivier's view on awards. Speaking of his own profession, he once said: "I thoroughly disapprove of prizes for actors – unless I am receiving them." For those of us not receiving prizes of any kind at present, there is plenty to disapprove of.

On Saturday night, the British Comedy Awards will salute the best of British comedy. They are not to be confused with the Perrier awards (saluting the best of British comedy at the Edinburgh Festival), the Stand Up Show Awards, the Radio 4 Open Mic Awards, the Channel 4 So You Think You Are Funny Awards (saluting the best of British comedy at the Edinburgh Festival not already saluted by the Perrier Awards).

Nor, of course, are they to be confused with the comedy prizes in the National Television Awards, nor the recent and already devalued BBC 60 Years of Auntie Awards, which was so amenable as to place *Men Behaving Badly* above *Fawlty Towers*, *Hancock*, *Seaplane* et al. And despite the alleged wealth of comic talent suggested by all these awards, the same few faces – or to put it another way, Martin Clunes – manage to turn up at all them. Indeed, Jonathan Ross manages to be both presenting and possibly receiving awards on Saturday.

Nevertheless, in the awards league table, comedy is a Johnny-come-lately. It is publishing that really knows how to knock back the claret. There are more than 200 book prizes presented annually in the UK. The trouble with being "awarded out", as we now are, is that the ever-increasing num-

ber of prizes are ceasing to have any value; they are failing in their primary objective of sorting the wheat from the chaff.

What, apart from an extra five grand, does it signify in winning the £20,000 Turner Prize on Thursday, rather than the £15,000 Paul Hamlyn award seven days earlier – both for contemporary art? Who's the better actor, an Olivier Award winner or an Evening Standard drama award victor? My own industry is not immune. Is a British Press Award equivalent to a What the Papers Say award? Is the former more prestigious because it's older, or the latter because it's televised?

Why are there so many awards? The Media Planning Guide for next month lists 34 major awards for December alone. Part of the answer is that business sponsors who put money into the arts like to see a high-profile, celebrity return for their money.

But there is another reason. Award ceremonies are easy and relatively cheap television. Independent production companies keen to get a prime-time slot are fast realising this. Michael Hurlst, the man behind next Saturday's comedy awards, runs his own production company; he came up with the idea of the awards and will be televising them for a sizeable fee.

They will be good fun, no doubt, but they will prove little. Awards, particularly in television, are two a penny. We should cut back the number of awards to a maximum of two per annum in any art form. Only then might they be taken to be acknowledging something out of the ordinary.

David Lister

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Pre-Budget celebration sends sterling and shares soaring

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Advance celebrations of the Budget took the pound to its highest level since sterling crashed out of the Exchange Rate Mechanism just over four years ago, and helped shares climb within reach of their all-time high.

The pound gained more than one and a half pence compared with its previous close to end at

DM2.5419 yesterday. Its index against a range of currencies rose by 0.3 to 92.8.

Neil MacKinnon, chief economist at Citibank, said: "Sterling is a high-yield currency in the eyes of international investors. The strength of the economy means interest rates in the UK are on an upward path."

Kenneth Clarke's statement yesterday that there was no question of sterling shadowing the Euro also helped boost the pound. "Sterling

is now a floating currency," the Chancellor said.

However, analysts said it was the hope that the Budget would be cautious enough to prevent another rise in interest rates that took the FTSE 100 index of share prices through the 4,000 level on Friday and climbed again yesterday. It advanced nearly 36 points to reach 4,054.6 yesterday.

Although the volume of trading, concentrated on blue chip stocks,

was not heavy, strategists said the index could easily pass its previous record of 4,073, Budget permitting. The traditional strong year-end rally was in prospect.

The financial futures markets are betting that base rates will be 7 per cent by next summer. "The stock market can live with that, but a lot depends on the nature of the Budget," said Mr MacKinnon.

If Mr Clarke is over-generous with tax cuts, the pound would rise even

further but shares would fall sharply, he predicted. A net reduction in taxes of perhaps £3bn would be acceptable, but £5bn would not.

Bob Semple, a strategist at NatWest Markets, agreed. "Blatant electioneering by the Chancellor would hit the stockmarket," he said.

Even so, shares in retailers saw some of the strongest gains yesterday based on the expectation of a reduction in income tax that would boost consumer spending

power next year. Marks & Spencer, Boots and Kingfisher were all higher.

Analysts said London was also catching up to other stockmarkets, especially Wall Street. The Dow Jones index was 33 points higher at 6,504.93 by late morning. It set a new record of 6,471.76 on Friday.

The rationale for yesterday's rise was a decline in housing sales during October. Although still buoyant, this suggested the US economy is ex-

panding at a sustainable pace. Figures yesterday showed a 1.57 per cent decline to an annual rate of 3.97 million units.

A survey of 44 members by the National Association of Business Economists showed them forecasting growth in the US next year of 2.3 per cent, the same as expected this year. The economists also predicted inflation at 2.9 per cent in both years, and reduced their average forecast for interest rates.

Fire could leave Eurotunnel with £165m bill

Michael Harrison

Eurotunnel could face a bill of up to £165m if, as senior executives now fear, last week's fire in the Channel Tunnel prevents it from resuming a full service for at least three months.

This figure does not include the cost of repairing the damage caused by the inferno on board a freight shuttle a week ago which should be fully covered by Eurotunnel's insurance.

But nor does it include the long-term costs and loss of revenue which the company could suffer if it is forced into extensive modifications to the design of the freight shuttles and the tunnel's safety systems.

Shares in Eurotunnel have slumped by 10 per cent since the fire last Monday night. Yesterday they fell 5p to 81p as the extent of the impact on the company's revenues began to sink in and the French and Belgian railways disclosed they were considering suing Eurotunnel for loss of revenue.

The near-total closure of the tunnel is presently costing Eurotunnel about £1.5m a day in lost revenues. In addition to its lost revenue, Eurotunnel's wages bill is running at about £1.8m a week.

Under the terms of its railway usage contract with Eurostar, SNCF of France and the Belgian state railway SNCB, Eurotunnel is liable to pay penalties of £457,000 a week for the first 16 weeks that the tunnel is not in operation. That figure rises to £914,000 a week for the following 16 weeks and to £1.37m a week after that.

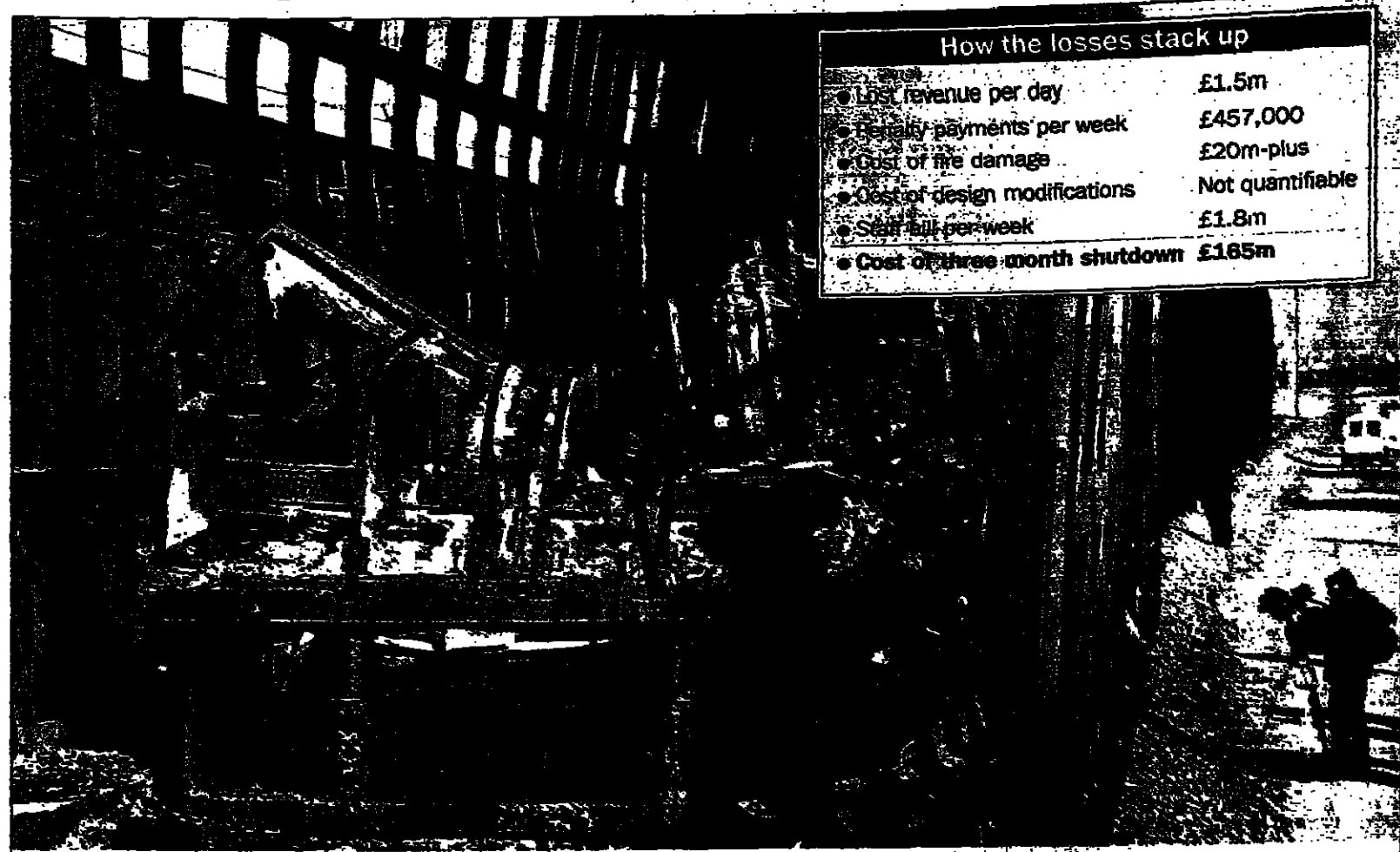
If the tunnel were out of action to a substantial degree for three months, it would lose up to £135m in revenue and £7.3m in penalty payments while its wages bill would run to £22m. Eurotunnel says that it is insured against loss of revenue resulting from the fire but it is unable to say how much lost income it would recover. About £600,000 of its daily revenues come from a minimum usage charge paid by the railways but this is not

thought to be covered by insurance.

Jeff Summers, a Eurotunnel analyst with the debt trading specialists Klesh and Co, reckons that the fire could result in the loss of around £65m in revenues between now and the end of the year on top of the £711m the tunnel was already forecast to lose. Assuming that insurance covers half the revenue lost since services were suspended then Eurotunnel is looking at additional losses this year of about £30m.

But Mr Summers says it is almost impossible to quantify the long-term impact on the tunnel's finances. "It is a totally imperfect science. Nobody knows the answer including Eurotunnel but what is becoming increasingly evident is that the attitude of the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority is unclear. We just don't know whether they will enforce any design changes on Eurotunnel."

"If it did require major design modifications then insurance is unlikely to cover the cost and



Just the beginning: Chief executives of Eurotunnel now fear that last week's inferno could lead to a three-month delay in the resumption of services

if those changes have an impact on the way the system operates then Eurotunnel has a very big problem."

Before the fire Eurostar had been selling some 19,000 tickets a day and operating 24 re-

turn services between London, Paris and Brussels. SNCF and SNCB said yesterday they were considering suing Eurotunnel for damages. A spokesman for SNCB would not quantify the size of any claim against Euro-

tunnel but said that lost revenues were running into "several million francs a day". Eurotunnel said that it was close to putting a proposal to the Safety Authority setting out how it planned to restart ser-

vices and what level of service it would operate. "We are hopeful it will only be a matter of days before some services resume," said a spokeswoman. The only commercial services that are running are

through freight trains. Eurostar is running empty trains through in readiness for start-up and Le Shuttle tourist trains are being used to transport staff between Folkestone and Calais.

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Crest wins an eleventh-hour SIB reprieve

Peter Rodgers
Financial Editor

Crest, the City's new securities settlement system, won an eleventh-hour reprieve last night when its board decided to stick to a timetable of commissioning by next April.

The board's decision, after two hours of fierce cross-questioning of executives running the project, came after pressure from the City to put back the timetable to allow a catalogue of problems to be sorted out.

The critical factor in the decision to continue the present commissioning timetable appears to have been a favourable reaction from a meeting of all the main City regulators last Friday, convened by the Securities and Investments Board.

The regulators have the power to suspend or close Crest if settlement delays threaten the financial health of securities firms. Crest was set up on the initiative of the Bank of England as a replacement for the Stock Exchange's Taurus system which was abandoned after it had cost City firms £400m.

CrestCo, the company which has taken over the project from the Bank, said the regulators' meeting "recognised the concerns of market-users but acknowledged both the recent improvements in Crest performance and CrestCo's commitment to the SIB that these

would be maintained and developed."

On this basis there was no need "at this stage" to make further changes to the transition timetable - beyond those made by Crest itself last month. But the SIB would "continue to monitor the situation closely."

Crest's own changes gave a six-week breathing space from 2 December to mid-January in which loading of new securities on to the system will be slowed and then halted, while keeping to the April target for completion.

Scott Dobbie, chairman of CrestCo, said the board's confidence was helped by the fact that improvements to the system introduced last Friday were "planned, promised and also worked".

Iain Seville, CrestCo chief executive, said that a survey by the Securities and Futures Authority and the Stock Exchange found that three-quarters of firms supported a continuation of the timetable.

Mr Seville said Crest's share of the settlement market had risen from 25 to 40 per cent in two weeks and that the number of settlements achieved on the day intended had risen from 60 to 70 per cent in the last 10 days, compared with the 79 per cent at the Stock Exchange's old paper-based clearing system, Taurus. Crest hoped to match Taurus by mid-January.

Trend towards accounting transparency gathering pace

Roger Trapp

The trend for accountancy firms to match the openness required of their clients is gathering pace, with two practices due to announce full financial information next week.

Pannell Kerr Forster, a second-tier accountancy company, is making what it calls "proper disclosure" on Thursday next week, only a few days after Ernst & Young publishes its

long-promised results.

Both moves have come in the wake of KPMG's publication of such details as profits and partners' remuneration following last year's decision to incorporate its audit arm with the specific aim of giving partners greater protection against large law suits.

As partnerships, accountancy firms are not required to publish any financial information and the leading practices have

until this year merely produced gross fee income figures every June.

Since KPMG's announcement, Stoy Hayward, another second-tier accountancy firm, and a law firm have produced figures.

But it is widely believed that it will become the norm in the years to come.

KPMG believes that this will be partly due to companies asking firms to follow his

organisation's example and partly due to people within the firms seeing the commercial advantage in being more transparent.

Last month, KPMG published a report suggesting that 93 per cent of companies were in favour of the large accountancy firms disclosing their financial information, with 69 per cent saying that they wanted them to be audited in the same way as plc's.

An Ernst & Young spokeswoman explained that the firm's decision was part of "a general move towards greater openness".

But observers are seeing it as part of an effort to win support for the firm's likely decision to try to reduce its exposure to large negligence claims by taking advantage of the limited liability partnership legislation that it and fellow big six firm Price Waterhouse helped to

develop. Price Waterhouse - in common with other leading firms - has not yet made a commitment on disclosure and is believed to be awaiting details of the Jersey law's requirements.

All the firms are continuing to lobby Government ministers for a change in the law to prevent them and other professionals from being held fully liable for any loss even if they are only partly responsible.

Alcopops leave Merrydown flat

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

Merrydown, the cider maker, clouded the already confused alcopop picture yesterday by claiming that the success of the market for alcoholic soft drinks, in which it is the second-biggest player, had been responsible for a fall in its profits in the six months to September.

Merrydown's warning, which sent its shares 8.5p lower to 100p, is the latest twist in a saga which has seen rival Matthew Clark blaming the burgeoning alcopops sector for a collapse in its Taunton and Gayer cider brands while HP Bulmer dismissed the impact of the new drinks on what it claimed was a booming market for cider.

Merrydown said sales of its Two Dogs alcoholic lemonade, which is number two in the alcopop market to Bass's Hooper's Hooch, had suffered from the introduction of over 90 new products in the 15 months



Off-limits: Merrydown's alcopop sales have been hit by the launch of 90 new products in 15 months

since it in effect created a whole new drinks sector in July 1995. Profits fell because of the high advertising and promotional expenditure needed to maintain share in that fragmented market.

Richard Purdey, chairman,

admitted that Bass, which claims 70 per cent of the alcopop market, had taken market share during the period. Two Dogs, which accounted for about 30 per cent last year, had fallen to about 15 per cent of the market currently.

Pre-tax profits in the six

months to September fell from £1.16m to £670,000 on higher sales of £19.4m (£18.4m). Merrydown refuses to break out the proportion of sales represented by alcopops and its cider brands, Pulse, Vintage and Merrydown Original, but Paul Millman, managing director, admitted that the fall was due mainly to a change in mix away from higher-margin alcoholic soft drinks.

He dismissed suggestions that the decline at Two Dogs, which had forced it to offer discounts to clear excess stocks of caused products, represented a bursting of the alcopop bubble. Merrydown sees the £300m alcopop market continuing to grow as the drinks majors such as IDV enter the fray with spirits-based drinks such as its Moscow Mule.

In cider, Merrydown continued to increase its share of the market. Pulse and Vintage Cider helped lift Merrydown's share from 4 to 4.7 per cent.

Comment, page 22

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996 High	1996 Low
FTSE 100	4054.60	+35.50	+0.9	4073.10	3632.30
FTSE 250	4422.30	+11.00	+0.2	4568.60	4015.30
FTSE 350	2012.20	+15.10	+0.8	2022.10	1816.80
FT Small Cap	2166.17	+2.26	+0.1	2244.36	1954.06
FT All Share	1883.72	+13.95	+0.7	1994.54	1781.95
New York	6513.88	+42.12	+0.7	6471.76	5032.94
Tokyo	21283.57	+77.46	+0.4	22068.80	19734.70
Hong Kong	13239.39	+122.60	+0.9	13239.39	10204.87
Frankfurt	2798.19	+35.50	+1.3	2798.19	2253.35

Sources: FT Information

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling*	UK medium gilt	US long bond			
1 Month	1 Year	Medium Bond (%)	Year Ago	Long Bond	Year Ago
UK 8.06	6.94	7.51	7.53	7.60	7.69
US 8.25	5.49	8.13	5.89	6.42	6.23
Japan 0.88	0.69	7.57	2.69	-	-
Germany 3.03	3.19	5.81	6.20	6.70	-

CHANGES				
Falls	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change	
MIL Laboratories	245	24.5	9.1	
Eurometrol Plc/SA	81	5	5.8	
Albert Fisher Gm	41.5	1.8	4.0	

CURRENCIES						
£/\$			£/DM		£/¥	
Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Yesterday	Change	Yesterday	Change
\$ (London)	1.6727	-0.85c	1.5496		£ (London)	0.5978 +0.20 0.8454
\$ (New York)	1.6716	-1.85c	1.5517		£ (New York)	0.5983 +0.66 0.8443
DM (London)	2.5412	+1.57m	2.2279		DM (London)	1.5182 +1.08m 1.4358
¥ (London)	188.179	+¥1.393	188.134		¥ (London)	112.900 +¥1.275 101.910
£/Indice	92.8	+0.3	83.2		£/Indice	96.7 +0.7 94.1

(Only two exchange rates and 90 Bond Index at 3:00 pm)

DOLLAR					
Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
\$ (London)	1.6727	-0.85c	1.5496		
\$ (New York)	1.6716	-1.85c	1.5517		
DM (London)	2.5412	+1.57m	2.2279		
¥ (London)	188.179	+¥1.393	188.134		
£/Indice	92.8	+0.3	83.2		

OTHER INDICATORS						
Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago	Index	Lastest	Yr Ago	Next Page
Oil Brent \$	22.80	-0.61	17.97			
Gold \$	375.00	-1.85	363.70	RPI	153.8 +2.70c	149.7 12 Dec
Gold £	224.00	-0.50	222.00	GDP	108.9 +2.30c	105.7 Jan 27

Yesterday			Day's chg	Year Ago	Index			Latest	Yr Ago	Next Figs
Oil Brent \$	22.80	-0.61	17.07	RPI	153.8	+2.7pc	149.7	12 Dec		
Gold \$	375.00	-1.85	383.70	GDP	108.9	+2.3pc	105.7	Jan 27		
Gold £	224.18	+0.04	247.29							

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Irrelevant arguments against the stability pact

Nothing could be more irrelevant than the present furore among MFs over the European stability pact to govern the economies of countries that become part of the European Monetary Union. Labour MPs can hardly be blamed for trying to exploit the Government's discomfort over Europe, but that the Government's own backbenchers should be doing the same on the eve of today's last chance saloon Budget, is to put it mildly, a pretty odd spectacle.

The first irrelevance is that actually all this was agreed three years ago at the time of Maastricht. To the extent that the present negotiations sign away sovereignty over economic policy, they were in fact rights ceded with the treaty, a process with which some of those who now rail against EMU were then actively involved. But then consistency never was a strong point among Euroceptics.

The second irrelevance is that by participating in negotiations over the pact, and presumably eventually agreeing its terms, the Government gives away nothing. Rather the reverse. It participates in and influences something which in or out of EMU, is of vital importance to Britain's economic future. True, the Government commits itself to a system of fines, deposits and other disciplines the country will have to abide by should it join EMU, but how can attempting to influence the rules of a club we might join be judged against our interests? If on the other hand we do not join, the rules have

no jurisdiction except as a yardstick by which to judge our performance against the "ins".

Britain's interest in ensuring continuing convergence among member states is equally vital even if we are out. Make no mistake about it, once EMU gets under way, its economic consequences for the whole of Europe, in or out, would be disastrous. To bury our heads in the sand and refuse to have anything to do with something that still looks highly likely to happen, with or without us, would be an act of gross irresponsibility.

The third irrelevance is the most obvious one – that nobody, least of all the right wing of the Conservative Party, could have any objection to the convergence criteria the stability pact is being set up to police and enforce. Even Ken Livingstone apparently agrees with the need to reduce Government borrowing and national debt to levels which fall within the Maastricht limits. Misguided or not, fiscal and monetary rectitude is the economic mantra of the age. To enforce it across member states is only a logical extension and development of the single market, as indeed is a single currency, since it prevents nations gaining short term competitive advantage by unfair means. Should some other, hardly guessed at, form of economic management eventually gain the ascendancy, the rules would presumably be changed accordingly.

Those who argue against active involve-

ment in stability pact negotiations are actually arguing against membership of the European Union. But you won't catch many of them admitting it, not in public anyway.

The vision of a nation paying through the nose for brightly coloured gunk with a charmless name like Thickhead is an unimproving one. But it is also largely wrong. The sound and fury the so-called alcopops have generated is way out of proportion to their real social or economic significance.

The tide of misinformation started with Matthew Clark, the Taunton and Gayer cider maker, which attempted, with some initial success, to pin the blame for its own management and marketing shortcomings on the new drinks. Because the arrival of Two Dogs from Australia and Bass's quick response in the form of Hooper's Hooch seemed to have been such a storming success, investors were prepared to swallow Clark's dubious claim that they had knocked the bottom clean out of the premium cider market.

The flaws in that argument began to show during the summer when Clark's arch rival Bulmer, stung by its deraiding in sympathy with its hapless rival, told investors that the cider market was in fine fettle thank you very much. Clark's real problem, Bulmer implied, lay in its reluctance to shell out on advertising, arguably the lifeblood of any drinks company.

Interim profits figures yesterday from Merrydown further complicated an already murky picture when the Sussex cider maker made the eccentric claim that the dramatic success of alcoholic soft drinks, a market in which it was a dominant player, had led not to a rise in profits but a rather startling collapse. The cost of maintaining share in a market that had attracted 90 rivals in a little over a year, the company said, was bleeding it dry.

This over-hyped sector will remain centre stage this afternoon if, as forecast, Kenneth Clarke attempts to win a few easy votes by clamping down on alcopops in the same way that he singled out high strength ciders last year.

It will be a pointless exercise in fiscal terms because, at £300m, the whole sticky sector accounts for rather less than a third of the cider market, which itself is tiny in the context of beer or spirits sales. The tax take will make no difference to the public finances, but nobody is going to worry too much if Mr Clarke helps bring about the demise of these sickly concoctions.

Reaction in financial markets to last week's fire in the Channel Tunnel always looked a little complacent. Now that the extent of the damage, the length of time repairs will take and the impact on revenues are becoming better known, nervousness is understandably beginning to take hold. It is easy to see why the markets initially took

the fire in their stride. Set in the context of Eurotunnel's debts (£8.7bn) and its forecast losses (£720m this year), even an additional shortfall in revenue of as much as £150m seems small beer. Since this is a venture which isn't going to pay its own way until well into the next millennium, why not just add the losses to the bill?

But those who believe that the financial consequences begin and end there may be in for a rude shock. First Eurotunnel has the no small task of steering its debt restructuring package past shareholders and banks. The fire cannot have helped that. Even if its debt restructuring is approved it will still have £4bn of junior debt to pay which it can only service by issuing bits of paper called stabilisation notes. It has £1.8bn worth of this funny money – but the revenues lost owing to the fire could mop up nearly 10 per cent of that alone.

The bigger question for Eurotunnel is what the fire will do to its long-term prospects. That people will stop using the tunnel can probably be discounted. Two spectacular plane crashes in as many weeks have not dented our appetite for air travel. More important is whether the fire changes the economics of the venture. It would only take the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority to insist on a design modification here and an extra safeguard there and it could wreck the fragile margins on which the tunnel operates. The new mood of nervousness is appropriate.

Anderson confirms role in Forest consortium

Nigel Cope

Sandy Anderson, head of Porterbrook Leasing, yesterday confirmed his lead role in a powerful consortium bidding for control of Nottingham Forest football club as the group named its other members.

It also includes Charles Scott, head of Cordiant, which owns the Sanchi & Sanchi advertising agency, and Nigel Doughty-Hanson of Doughty & Hanson, the London-based private client fund manager. Also involved is Tim Farr, a member of the family which used to control Home Breweries, the Nottingham brewer now owned by Scottish & Newcastle.

It is thought that if the consortium's bid is successful, Mr Anderson will take on executive duties at Forest, possibly as chief executive.

It is not clear if this would mean him leaving Porterbrook, the train leasing company which was taken over by his company Stagecoach in the summer in a deal which netted Mr Anderson £33m.

"We've got to consider what's best for the club," Mr Anderson said. "No decision has been taken and all this is a long way out. I'm very happy with Stagecoach."

The consortium, co-ordinated by accountants Stoy Hayward, is one of two groups battling for control of Forest, the struggling Premiership football club.

The other group includes former Tottenham chairman Irving Scholar, Blenheim exhibitions founder Lawrie Lewis and ex-Blenheim chief executive Phil Soar.

The Forest board met yesterday to consider the bids but

has yet to name its preferred bidder. It was expected to make an announcement ahead of last night's league match against Blackburn Rovers. An emergency meeting of Forest's shareholders is likely to follow next month.

Mr Anderson's group is talking with other possible investors and has not ruled out increasing its offer for the club. Its current offer is around £15m.

Further announcements on new investors may be made this week. The group said they were "quietly confident" of their chances in the bid battle.

Most of the businessmen in the group have local connections. Mr Anderson, a Scot who was once on the books of Partick Thistle, lives in Nottingham and supports the club. Nigel Doughty-Hanson hails from nearby Newark and is a

season-ticket holder at the City ground. They brought in Charles Scott, who has no known Nottingham connections. Mr Farr is a Forest season ticket holder.

Stoy Hayward said yesterday that it was aware of a "golden share" rule which is a condition of the sale.

This rule dictates that 80 per cent of funds raised from play-off transfers must be re-invested in new players. The new owners will not be allowed to sell the club for five years and be barred from changing its name or the colour of the team's red shirts.

"We've known about that (the golden share) for some time and to be honest it doesn't make much difference."

"We were never interested in asset-stripping the club anyway so we are happy to be bound by it."



In the team: Charles Scott, head of the Cordiant advertising group, is one of the consortium

Return to ERM gives lira a boost

ANDREW GUMBEL
Rome

International financial markets yesterday heralded the return of the lira to the Exchange Rate Mechanism with a surge of confidence that boosted shares and bond prices as well as the Italian currency, as government leaders and economic analysts sounded more hopeful about the country's prospects of joining the single European currency on time.

The lira, which crashed out of the ERM at the same time as sterling in September 1992, was readmitted to the currency grid late on Sunday night after a fraught weekend of negotiations in Brussels over the central parity at which it should be traded. The parity finally agreed, 990 lire to the German mark, was stiffer than the Italian government and Italian exporters had been hoping for, but was only a shade stricter than the values at which the lira has been

trading recently on the open market.

In yesterday's euphoria, the currency actually finished the day at or near the newly agreed central parity – a marked jump from the rate of 999 to the mark at which it had started the day. "Four years of painful exile have finally ended," commented Italy's Treasury Minister, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi.

The news was greeted with greater caution by the country's industry federation, which has reaped the fruits of four years of booming exports and fears that a stronger, albeit more stable, currency will lead to a sharp slowdown in growth.

The parity may not in the end matter too much since the ERM allows for a 15 per cent fluctuation either way. But the argument that the issue has generated in Italy is a symptom of broader misgivings about the sacrifices necessary to prepare for European integration.

Hamish McKee, page 24

Watchdog in row with Emap

Matthew Horsman
Media Editor

Pirc, the shareholder rights action group, yesterday accused Emap, the media conglomerate, of "disingenuousness" in the latest salvo in Emap's debilitating boardroom bust-up.

Coming out squarely in favour of two dissident non-executive directors, whose removal Emap's management is seeking at an EGM next Monday, Pirc said shareholders should oppose the proposals.

"If the two non-executives are removed, it establishes a damaging precedent in corporate governance," Pirc said. "Fears of removal will inevitably undermine the independence of directors."

The two directors believe they are being targeted because of their opposition to controversial changes to Emap's rules on non-executive directors last summer. Eighty-two per cent of shareholders agreed to new rules that would give the board the right to remove directors without specific shareholder approval on a vote of 75 per cent of the board. They also agreed to a new minimum of three rather than five independent directors.

Anne Simpson, head of Pirc, said the company had been "disingenuous" in its claims that the changes were in line with the common practice of other companies.

The watchdog published the results of a survey of 129 companies, including all of the

FTSE 100, which showed only 9 per cent had provisions similar to Emap's.

Emap shot back, claiming that Pirc had "ignored much of what we had to say when it did not suit them". Emap believes that its attempt to remove the two directors, Joe Cooke and Ken Simmonds, is consistent with the principles of good corporate governance, and that the two men had been too long on the Emap board – 27 years between them – and that they had refused a compromise offered to them at a special board meeting early this month.

A spokesman added that of FTSE 100 companies, both Marks & Spencer and Prudential had similar provisions on the removal of directors. "That

puts us in very good company," the spokesman said.

Pirc said that the removal of the two directors was linked to succession plans at Emap, a view dismissed by the company. There have been reports of disagreements between the chief executive, Robin Miller, and the managing director, David Arculus, in advance of the retirement of Sir John in 1998. In its statement yesterday, Pirc claimed that "it is not in shareholder interests that [the directors] be removed before the succession issue is resolved."

The Emap spokesman said the removal of the dissident directors "has nothing to do with succession. There are no decisions taken about who will replace the chairman."

\$7.7bn US gas electricty deal

DAVID USBORNE
New York

Consolidation in the American energy sector gathered speed yesterday when Duke Power, a North Carolina-based electricity utility, announced plans to acquire PanEnergy Corp, a gas pipeline operator, in a deal worth \$7.7bn (£4.6bn).

If approved by shareholders and by government regulators, the deal with the largest ever to be consummated by companies from the electricity and gas sectors of the power industry. Duke Power and PanEnergy will have a combined market value of \$23bn. The new company will be called Duke Energy.

"As the gas and electric markets have begun to converge, we have recognised a need to align ourselves with an electric partner," Paul Anderson, president of PanEnergy, said.

Duke Energy has a strong reputation as one of America's largest and most efficient electric utilities with 1.8 million customers in the Carolinas. PanEnergy, based in Houston, is the country's third-largest distributor of natural gas with 37,000 miles of pipeline in the Mid-west and North-east.

Spurred by deregulation, the consolidation of America's

power concerns offers customers, industrial and residential, the chance to shop one-stop for their energy needs.

Other recent transactions have included the purchase by Enron Corp of Houston, America's largest natural gas supplier, of Portland General Corp.

The drive to expand has also led several US electric utilities to look abroad for acquisitions and, in particular, to the UK where deregulation has also taken effect. Recent examples have included the outstanding bid of Idaho-based CalEnergy for Northern Electric.

In a tax-free stock swap, Duke is to trade 1.044 shares of its stock for every share in PanEnergy, representing an 183 per cent premium over PanEnergy's closing price last Friday of \$47.87. Both companies expect the deal to be completed within 12 months.

"This strategic merger is about growth, opportunity and creating value," said William Grigg, chairman of Duke.

"Each of our companies has a recognised name and a strong reputation in our industries. This combination creates the pre-eminent provider of energy and energy services in North America."

Move to block Salvesen payout

Magnus Grimond

Christian Salvesen, the Scottish transport to generator hire group, walked into a row yesterday as it unveiled long-awaited plans to demerge its Aggreko generator hire business and pay £150m in special dividends.

The proposals, meant to assuage shareholders after the board rejected a bid approach worth around £1.1bn from rivals Hays in the summer, were immediately denounced as "pandering to City speculators" by Sir Gerald Elliott, a former chief executive and chairman of the group, who is threatening moves to block the measures.

Shareholders are set to receive an enhanced dividend of 17p a share in February and a further 34p the following month as part of a capital reconstruction. But speaking from Edinburgh, Salvesen's home, Sir Gerald said: "I think this thing is absolutely wrong. This [dividend] is paying out nearly half the company's net asset value and stripping out the company's assets. While effecting a merger which is not operationally sensible. "It is just pandering to City speculators to make up for the board having not accepted the Hays bid. It is disgraceful and puts the whole question of the

board in doubt." But the charges were rejected by Chris Masters, Salvesen's current chief executive, who starts a round of visits to institutional shareholders in Edinburgh today. Announcing a 15 per cent rise in profits to £51.6m for the half-year to September, Mr Masters said this was the first year the business had been correctly positioned since the re-focusing of the group started some years ago. "Allowing Aggreko to become an independent business is the culmination of that strategy," while reducing the capital base through the enhanced dividends was in the best interests of shareholders, he claimed. Equity "is a damned sight more expensive than debt", he said, and this move would cut the cost of capital by 1 or 2 percentage points and still allow the business to grow, even if gearing is expected to reach 110 per cent by March.

Sir Gerald, who personally owns 2 per cent of the group and was either chief executive or chairman from 1973 to 1988, said it was "quite likely" he would attempt to form an action group to prevent the plans going through. He also hinted that they could trigger a backlash north of the border.

Investment Column, page 22

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business

Babcock to give Rosyth yard the kiss of life

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

The controversial privatisation of Rosyth naval dockyard was finally secured yesterday when the Government announced the sale of the facility to Babcock International, the troubled engineering and contracting group, for an undisclosed price.

Announcing the decision, the Ministry of Defence also pledged to provide work to refit Royal Navy aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines which should secure more than 3,000 jobs for the next five years. Rosyth's trades unions, which had earlier fought the sell-off, described the decision as a "fair compromise".

The news ends a long saga in the turbulent history of Rosyth, which was put up for sale by the Ministry of Defence three years ago and subsequently threatened with closure. Serious negotiations with Babcock had dragged on for more than two years.

The price tag paid will not be revealed until the contract is officially signed, though it is believed to be at the lower end of a range of between £20m and £30m and is slightly less than analysts had expected. Dr John Parker, Babcock's chairman, said it would be paid out of the company's net cash reserves of more than £35m.

James Arbuthnot, the minister for defence procurement, said the deal would save taxpayers some £100m over the next 10 years and would give employees at Rosyth a long-term future.

He said the MoD would be using the yard for the forthcoming refits of two nuclear-powered submarines. HMS *Scylla* and HMS *Spartan*, along with the refits of the Navy's aircraft carriers, HMS *Invincible* and HMS *Ark Royal*, which will begin in 1998 and in effect give the yard a full order book.

Dr Parker said the work



Man the boats: Dr John Parker said projects at the yard would provide stability for a workforce of 3,211

would provide stability for the workforce of 3,200 people beyond the year 2000, though the long-term aim was to diversify into non-Government contracts.

He explained: "The allocated workload gives work for about five years at current capacity levels and then it's up to us to become more competitive and get work from outside."

Rosyth had recently won three other contracts from the Royal Navy: decommissioning the Polaris submarine HMS *Resolution* and the £30m refit of the destroyer, HMS *Cardiff*.

The sale also marks another stage in Babcock's struggle back

to profitability after disastrous

Desperate measures at Salvesen

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Christian Salvesen's management has in effect been under siege since rival distribution group Hays took a tilt at it in the summer. In their wisdom, chief executive Chris Masters and his team rejected that tentative offer, thought to have been worth around 390p a share, as "not in the best interests of shareholders".

The quid pro quo with the institutions for maintaining Salvesen's independent existence was that the group would bring forward ways of unlocking shareholder value. Yesterday, Mr Masters was as good as his word, unveiling plans to pay £150m in extra dividends, worth a total of 51p a share, and a demerger of the Aggreko specialist generator hire business. For his pains, he was greeted with a 1.5p fall in the share price to 322.5p as the rest of the market was soaring.

Quite apart from the rearguard action now being waged by former chief executive Sir Gerald Elliot, the problem Mr Masters faces is that his much-trailled plans are seen as a rather desperate measure. Even yesterday's announcement of a 15 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £51.6m for the six months to September was being regarded cynically in some quarters as Mr Masters pulling out all the stops to boost his share price.

That is a little unfair, as he has worked hard since taking the reins in 1989 to bring some order into what was a rag-bag of businesses. He has dumped activities ranging from bricks and housebuilding to pollution control and oil services, raising £100m over the past few years. Even so, it has never been clear what connection the remaining operations of distribution, frozen pea processing and generator hire had with each other. It therefore looks entirely logical to demerge the Aggreko hire business, as proposed.

The problem is that by doing so, the group will remove the main prop to profits. Aggreko was making £2m a year when it was acquired 12 years ago; now it is making more than that every month.

There are some signs of an improving trend. Frozen veg, which saw profits jump 50 per cent to £6.6m, is benefiting from a more normal crop after two bad years hit by drought. Meanwhile, Salvesen says it is seeing an end to the vice-like pressure the supermarket groups have exerted on its margins for the past four years or so.

Mr Masters says peering of 110 per cent after the special dividends will not impede the group's ability to grow, but, bearing in mind what happened to Northern Electric after a similar scorched earth policy, perhaps the best

thing for shareholders would be for a renewed bid from Hays to put the group out of its misery. Profits of approaching £90m would put the shares on a forward p/e ratio of 15. Hold for further action.

FirstBus bids for railways

By splashing out almost £160m on two key acquisitions this year in Manchester and Glasgow, FirstBus has cleverly positioned itself as the biggest player in the rapidly consolidating bus industry. Now it wants to repeat the same trick on the railways by squeezing better returns from another heavily subsidised transport sector.

Cost-cutting and efficiency gains have already pushed group operating margins up from 12.5 per cent to 14 per cent, helping pre-tax profits in the six months to September to rise from £9m to £23.5m. That figure was struck after £2.2m of restructuring costs, with the acquisitions themselves chipping in £7.2m to the bottom line.

Adjusted earnings per share rose from 4.6p to 6.1p, helped by a £3m tax credit, and the dividend was raised 13 per cent to 1.8p.

The financial performance is all the more striking given the disruption caused by June's IRA bomb in Manchester. FirstBus estimates that 750,000 fewer journeys were made into the devastated city centre, costing its GM Buses subsidiary £1m in lost revenue.

Worse, passengers are not returning to Manchester as quickly as anticipated, but FirstBus has scrapped 85 bus services in and around the city to compensate for the loss of trade.

In Glasgow, FirstBus will learn in the new year whether its £110m bid for Strathclyde Buses gets approval from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The referral prompted FirstBus to drop plans to bid for the ScotRail train franchise.

It is also waiting to hear from Opra, the rail regulator, about Great Eastern

of the first rail franchises to be sold off and which has been short-listed for the North West Regional railways franchise. It is also involved in a joint venture to operate West Anglia railways.

Pre-tax profits after exceptional items of about £48m put the shares, up 5p to 191p on a forward price-earnings ratio of 15. Undemanding given the impressive track record and attractive growth prospects.

WH Smith move hits Filofax

It has been a pretty awful year for investors in Filofax, the personal organiser group. The shares nose-dived in July when the company issued a profits warning caused by a change in ordering policy at WH Smith and de-stocking in the US.

Not surprisingly, the shares have been drifting ever since. That they jumped 8p to 146.5p yesterday was due more to relief at no more bad news than to any genuinely positive tidings.

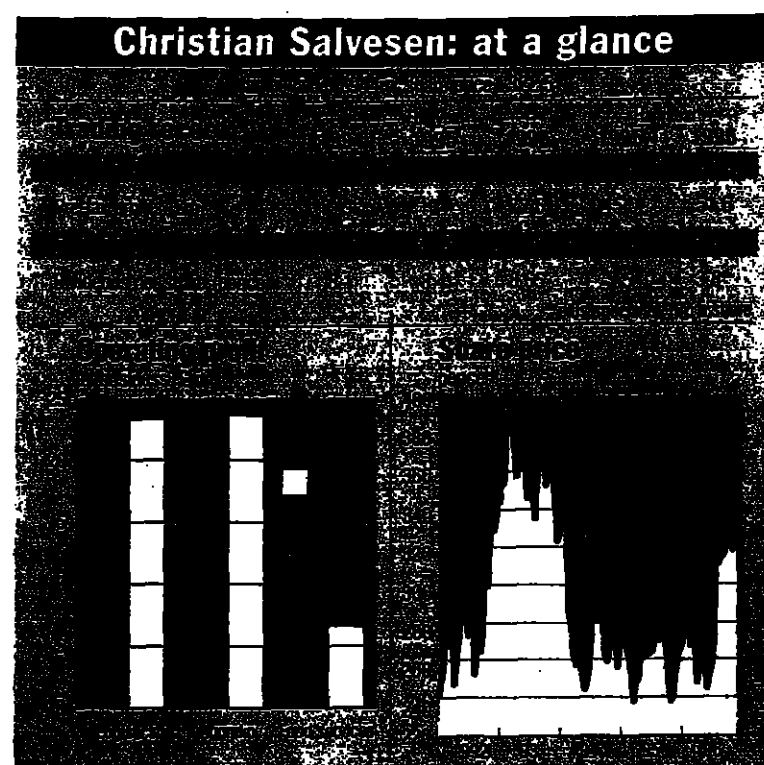
Management's problem is that the profits warning – just a month after an upbeat statement – knocked investor confidence badly. Filofax is constantly battling to lose its "1988 Yuppie" tag and the slightest bit of bad news sets alarm bells ringing.

Yesterday's results for the six months to September were in line with the warning, with pre-tax profits of £2.1m compared with the previous year's £2.9m. Chief executive Robin Field has increased the dividend by 11 per cent to demonstrate the board's confidence in future prospects.

The trading picture is mixed with France hit by de-stocking, the effects of industrial action and lower consumer confidence. Sweden is slow and America flat. The bright lights are Germany, Austria and Switzerland where combined sales are 25 per cent higher year-on-year. The UK, which accounts for half of group sales, has suffered from the WH Smith impact though Mr Field says this is a one-off hit, not a sea change in the market.

The product offer is being addressed, and Filofaxes costing £200 and more will be introduced into the UK and other markets from next spring to satisfy demand for upmarket presents.

If the market for personal organisers is as stable as Filofax says the shares – on a forward multiple of 11 on expected full-year profits of £5.7m – are quite cheap. But they are unlikely to enjoy a significant re-rating until further news about Christmas trading. Hold.



Christian Salvesen: at a glance

Record results for City publisher

Matthew Horsman
Media Editor

Euromoney, the acquisitive magazine publisher and conference organiser, yesterday unveiled record profits and dividends, reversing a patchy period dominated by cost-cutting and management changes.

Pre-tax profits climbed to £25.5m in the year to September, compared with £18.2m last year, while the dividend was set at 46p, up from 43.5p.

The record results, which were ahead of expectations, sent the shares higher to 1355p, from 1337.5p.

After a share buy-back last year, and £5.6m spent on acquisitions, Euromoney had cash on hand of £27.4m, and said it would continue to look for likely buying opportunities. In the past, targets have included companies in France and the US.

Euromoney, one of the most successful specialist magazine publishers, is controlled by the Rothermere family, which owns the Daily Mail and General Trust. It has built up a stable of magazines and conferences titles, usually by offering owners "earn-outs" that keep key managers in place for several years after the acquisition.

But the company ran into trouble when some senior management began to leave once most of their earned profits had been made. At the same time, the fast pace of acquisition led to what once analyst yesterday called "indigestion".

Cost-cutting, particularly of office overheads, has led to a marked improvement in overall margins, with several analysts upgrading their next-year forecasts. "They have certainly managed to cut costs beyond what we had been anticipating," one analyst said.

The company has also benefited from strong growth in advertising, and a buoyant market for corporate conferences and training.

The flagship *Euromoney* magazine has ridden the wave of strong stock and bond markets, and continued to perform strongly the company said.

Of the cash on hand, Euromoney has set aside £4m to fulfil existing earn-out arrangements, with the remainder available to fund further expansion.

Sketchley spruces up its profits

Nigel Cope

Sketchley, the dry-cleaning group which plunged into the red earlier this year due to the costs of closing 160 branches, turned in a more smartly pressed set of results yesterday, tempered by a cautious statement on consumer spending.

The group made pre-tax profits of £4.8m in the six months to September, a 10 per cent rise on the same period last year. Sketchley said the retail division had prospered following

the closure of loss-making outlets and the opening of other units in branches of Sainsbury's.

Commenting on consumer spending, Sketchley chief executive John Jackson said: "It's patchy week by week but generally we believe that consumer spending is strong and we feel that that will continue."

In the year to June, Sketchley recorded a £3.5m loss due to the cost of store closures and launched a £22m rights issue to strengthen the balance sheet. Mr Davies said another eight

joint Sketchley and SupaSnap outlets had been opened in Sainsbury's superstores following the agreement reached in March. A further 20 outlets are scheduled to open by the end of the financial year. The company plans to have 200 outlets over the next three years.

He said the performance of high street branches that had been converted into joint sites had continued to improve both in terms of sales and profits. Sketchley has sold 135 of the 160 outlets axed under the re-

structure. The other 25 sites are expected to be sold by March.

Current trading is steady with dry cleaning like-for-like sales up by "just under" 9 per cent since September. SupaSnap's comparative sales are 4 per cent higher compared with a 5 per cent increase between March and September.

Margins from workwear rental contracts are 1 per cent lower due to competitive pressures. The company plans to compensate for the erosion by driving sales higher.

The expansion of the workwear division has necessitated increased investment in stock and working capital as well as an increase in plant capacity.

Following the rights issue in June, net borrowings at the end of the half were £10.8m. Gearing stands at 19 per cent compared with 86 per cent at the year end.

Group sales were 4.2 per cent higher at £74.2m. The interim dividend was maintained at 1.1p. Sketchley shares fell 1.5p to 98.5p.

William Cook backs down on chief's claims

Patrick Toohy

The bid battle for William Cook took an unusual turn yesterday when the company was forced to clarify reports that a large proportion of its shareholders had rejected a hostile £58m offer from Triplex Lloyd, a rival engineer.

After an early morning meeting with the takeover Panel, the Sheffield-based castings group issued a statement saying it was "unable to confirm" weekend press reports containing statements attributed to its chairman, Andrew Cook.

"At present, William Cook is not able to confirm any of these statements and they should therefore be disregarded," the statement continued.

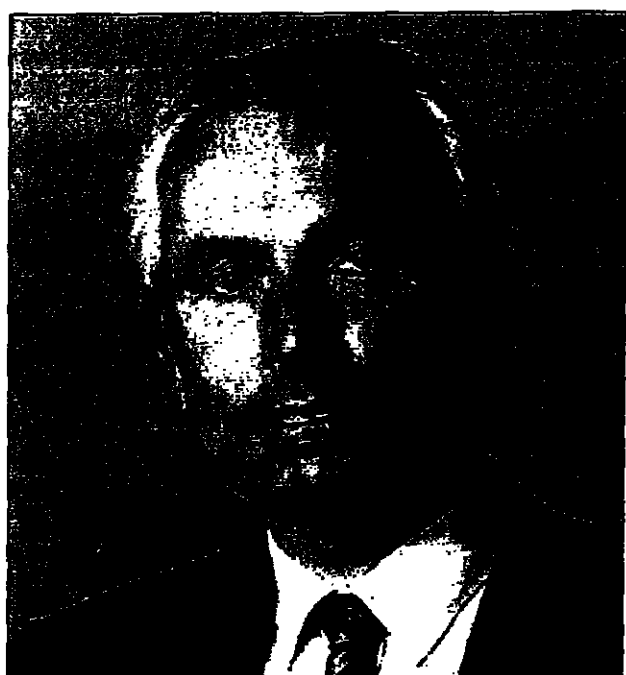
In a series of interviews over the weekend, Mr Cook referred to his company's sales and profits in the current half-year in March 1997 compared to pre-

vious periods. He also highlighted improvements in efficiency and indicated big shareholders were not prepared to accept the bid from Triplex Lloyd.

Last night Mr Cook's gaffe was being put down to inexperience. "It's the first time he has received an offer for his company and naturally he is very keen to get his message over," said a source familiar with the bid. "But there are established procedures for getting that information to the market."

William Cook said it would publish a profits forecast for the current year "during the offer period", but declined to say if this information would be contained in the company's defence document due within the next 10 days.

In the meantime, it urged shareholders to take no action, adding that all "all options aimed at demonstrating



Too many Cooks: Statements made by Andrew Cook at the weekend could not be confirmed yesterday

William Cook's value to its shareholders" were being reviewed.

Cook's shares are tightly held. Seven fund managers hold more than 60 per cent of the equity. The largest shareholder is Phillips & Drew with a 21 per cent stake.

Triplex Lloyd is offering 295.4p a share in cash or seven new Triplex shares and £13.50 for every nine Cook shares, worth 312.9p.

Last night shares in Cook closed 1p higher at 330p while Triplex was unchanged at 209.5p.

'Fat cat' bonuses shunned by AEA

CHRIS GODSMARK
Business Correspondent

Directors of AEA Technology, the recently privatised research and contracting arm of the Atomic Energy Authority, yesterday insisted they would receive no "fat cat" bonuses from the jump of almost 40 per cent in the share price since the sell-off.

Sir Anthony Clever, the chairman, said though executives were eligible for annual bonuses of up to 40 per cent of basic pay these would be based on profits performance rather than the increase in the share price.

AEA Technology shares, which were not sold to small investors, were priced at 280p but surged by 15 per cent on the first day of trading at the end of September. They closed yesterday at 389p, an increase of 1.5p on the day, making a huge rise of 39 per cent since the flotation.

Sir Anthony also insisted the taxpayer had got a good deal from the £224m sell-off, despite the subsequent increase in the share price. "I can't think of people at the time saying the offer was underpriced," he said.

In the weeks before privatisation the company had given a "cast-iron guarantee" that there would be no "fat cat" bonuses. Peter Watson, the chief executive, is also chairman of the rail leasing company Porterbrook and stands to net £4m from its takeover by Stagecoach.

AEA Technology yesterday revealed a 77 per cent drop in first-half pre-tax profits from £5.3m to £1.2m. The executive bonus payments would be based on the 18.5 per cent increase in operating profits to £6.4m.

IN BRIEF

• Ashbourne, the nursing home operator, is thought to be in talks with US group Sun Health Care over a possible takeover of the UK group. Ashbourne saw its shares soar 22p to 161p yesterday after it announced it had received a bid approach, but refused to name the prospective suitor. Sources close to the talks said the negotiations were with Sun, which owns 29.9 per cent of Ashbourne. The move follows last week's £13.4m recommended cash offer for APTA Healthcare by Sun's UK offshoot, Exceler Health Care. The US group picked up a 14 per cent stake in Ashbourne on its flotation in 1994, and has built up its holding over the last two years. Ashbourne also announced profits up from £6.5m to £11.7m in the year to September. The group is raising the dividend from 3.3p to 4.2p.

• Inn Business, the owner of 277 tenanted and 17 managed pubs, is to buy Sycamore, a chain of 216 former Allied-Lyons pubs, for £30.2m in a deal the company said marked the completion of its expansion strategy for the next 18 months or so. The deal is to be part-funded by a £15.8m five-for-11 open offer at 63.5p, which compared with yesterday's close of 70p, up 3p on the news. Inn Business forecast profits before tax and exceptional items for the year to the end of November of £2.7m, up from £304,000 last year. There will be a dividend of 1p to make a total for the year of 1.55p (nil).

• ML Laboratories, the drug and medical products group, reported pre-tax profits of £5.45m for the year to September, its first ever annual surplus. The move into the black reflected the receipt of the first instalments of licence fees. ML said those fees would shortly be overtaken by profits from the sale of products it plans to take to the market direct.

• Amey has won a £175m contract to build the 17-mile Croydon Tramlink system in partnership with Sir Robert McAlpine. The system will link Wimbledon, Beckenham and New Addington with Central Croydon. Other consortium members include 3i and Bombardier EuroRail.

• Shares in pipeline products distributor Oliver Ashworth made an uninspired stock market debut today as investors showed a lack of interest in the stock. After opening at a 7.5p premium to the 135p placing price, the shares drifted back and closed at 134.5p.

• IMI, the Birmingham-based engineering group, is to pay \$150m (£89m) for ISI Automation, a US maker of pneumatic components for the car industry. The acquisition more than doubles IMI's sales into the automotive market and nearly doubles its pneumatic parts sales into the US. The company, which made \$15.6m on turnover of \$99m last year, would complement the existing Norgren fluid power business and would be earnings enhancing. IMI said. The group plans to sell ISI parts through Norgren's 20-country distribution network.

Company Results				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Adams Pater (P)	98.4m (98.5m)	8.9m (8.5m)	13.5p (12.9p)	5.5p (4.8p)
AEA Technology (P)	112m (108m)	1.1m (4.3m)	0.9p (0.6p)	2.75p (-)
Adams Pater (P)	154.9m (154.3m)	45.13m (45.10m)	32.99p (27.79p)	3.12p (2.10p)
Applied Microsystems (P)	4.14m (3.47m)	-0.24m (0.06m)	-0.82p (0.29p)	- (-)
Adams Pater (P)	32.3m (26.7m)	11.7m (6.50m)	21.8p (13.4p)	4.2p (3.3p)
Christian Salvesen (P)	381m (344m)	51.6m (45.0m)	12.05p (10.67p)	3.0p (2.8p)
Field Group (P)	109m (97.3m)	10.5m (9.1m)	13.5p (11.5p)	3.1p (2.8p)
Pharos Group (P)	21.0m (19.8m)	2.1m (2.9m)	1.9p (1.35p)	1.5p (1.1p)
Firstline (P)	247m (174m)	23.5m (9.0m)	6.1p (4.60p)	1.8p (-)
Horizon Property (P)	0.99m (0.60m)	0.39m (0.10m)	11.62p (-)	- (-)
AIJ Group (P)	37.2m (40.7m)	4.8m (2.9m)	22.4p (6.7p)	1.65p (1.85p)
Marling Industries (P)	94.4m (32.5m)	0.92m (2.5m)	0.07p (0.63p)	0.12p (0.25p)
Mervyn (P)	19.4m (18.4m)	0.67m (1.16m)	3.57p (7.11p)	2.1p (2.0p)
ML Laboratories (P)	10.4m (1.14m)	5.45m (3.40m)	5.8p (4.59p)	nil (-)
National Home Loans (P)	- (-)	18.1m (15.1m)	20.9p (22.5p)	20.9p (22.5p)
Norfolk Technology (P)	14.5m (9.95m)	3.34m (1.88m)	8.73p (-)	0.5p
Onifield (P)	5.22m (6.83m)	0.49m (0.21m)	0.6p (0.63p)	nil (-)
RM (P)	80.0m (80.2m)	25.1m (18.8m)	25.1m (18.8m)	8p (8p)
Sketchley (P)	74.2m (71.4m)	4.8m (4.3m)	5p (4.5p)	1.10p (1.10p)
South Staffordshire Water (P)	32.5m (30.4m)	0.67m (2.7m)	0.07p (0.63p)	2.8p (2.8p)
Trinity Care (P)	4.95m (2.71m)	0.32m (0.22m)	4.3p (3.6p)	1.0p (1.0p)

(P) = Profit (L) = Loss (M) = Millions (B) = Billions (F) = Pounds (D) = Dollars

market report / shares

Data Bank

FTSE 100
4054.6+35.9

FTSE 250
4422.3+11.0

FTSE 350
2012.3+15.1

SEAO VOLUME
775.4m shares

49,137 bargains

Gifts Index
94.75 -0.04

Share spotlight

Rolls Royce

Rolls Royce

Rolls Royce

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Rolls Royce

Fly-away Rolls benefits from hopes of overseas orders

Taking Stock

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

Rolls-Royce, the aero engine group, led the latest blue chip change with Footsie moving to within 18.5 points of its high. While many shares were responding to Budget hopes, Rolls was flying high in anticipation of more lucrative overseas contracts.

Much of the excitement stemmed from US possibilities. Two groups, Boeing and Lockheed Martin, have battled through to be short-listed for the shoot-out to win the £100bn battle to provide the next generation of US and British fighter bombers. Which ever of the surviving groups emerges victorious, Rolls, with its virtual take-off expertise, will help build the engines.

It should also score from US plans to revamp the B52 aircraft. There is wide-spread support for recreating the B52. The work, likely to be undertaken by Rolls and General Electric of the US, could be worth £3bn. As a modest front runner to the possible US riches, Rolls announced it had won an £8m order to provide generating equipment for an Egyptian chemical plant.

The group's booming order book - it has captured a succession of contracts in recent months - provided further thrust to the shares, sending them 10.5p higher to 257.5p.

The Rolls performance helped Footsie climb 35.9 points to 4,054.6, a 100-point surge in two trading days. Again there was evidence the market had been caught short of stock and price movements were often exaggerated. Even so, after a lacklustre run, blue chips have suddenly come alive; whether their new-found exuberance will survive today's Kenneth Clarke test remains to be seen.

Drink shares, on stories the Chancellor was at last prepared to bow to pressure to counter



DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

the cross Channel bootlegging and cut excise duty, were strong. Guinness, up 10.5p to 457p, led spirits and Scottish & Newcastle was the beer front runner, 8.5p higher to 648p. Banks and insurers were other Budget beneficiaries.

But Eurotunnel continued to suffer from last week's fire, off 5p at 81p; British Steel and Redland were among those suffering from sterling's strength.

British Airways was lower on uncertainty over the American Airlines link.

Oil had a mixed session with the resumption of Iraqi supplies taking the shine off the sector. Enterprise Oil, at one time up 18.5p, ended 1.5p off

at 577.5p. Glaxo Wellcome rose 26.5p to 1,003p following ABN Amro Hoare Govett support and Rank Group put on 7.5p to 423p ahead of a presentation at Henderson Crosthwaite.

Hilldown Holdings improved 4.5p to 178p following a meeting with Nat West Securities. Transport Development was unchanged at 181p after meeting analysts.

The expected action among broadcasters following the Carlton Communications swoop on unquoted West Country Television, failed to materialise. Even long-running takeover favourite HTV gave ground, off 2p at 356.5p.

Among those to edge coppers higher were Border and Yorkshire-Tyne Tees.

Despite moving into profit ML Laboratories, the drugs group, fell a further 34.5p to 345p. The market was puzzled by the appearance of two determined sellers. Biocompatibles International, developing coatings for heart valves and optical lenses, continued to score on the back of the Kleinwort Benson enthusiasm, gaining 42.5p to 745p.

Grantham, the latest spin-off from the Burford property group, touched 133p, closing at 128p. Asset value of the warehousing company is put at 91p. Another newcomer, Access Plus, a marketing services group, hit 107.5p from a 90p placing.

In Business, the pubs chain, duly rolled out its takeover offer - a £30.2m bid for Sycamore Taverns. Ashbourne, a nursing homes company,

rose 22p to 161p following a bid approach. Sun Healthcare, a US group, sits on 29.2p and looks the most likely predator.

Hercules, a property services business, moved off from the Safeland property venture, jumped 33p to 83p following a profit surge from £31,000 to £390,000 and the acquisition of a £407m insurance contract.

Azlan, a computer group, lost 39p to 576p. The shares have fallen sharply in a week and are now below the 620p at which the company is making a £48.5m rights issue. Part of the cash is earmarked to take over Akam, a Dutch group specialising in computing training.

The market seems to have been unsettled by the company's comment that trading was only in line with expectations. SBC Warburg is the rights underwriter.

Wace, the printer, created interest, gaining 3p to 75.5p.

Shares of Emerald Energy, which has raised £7.5m from institutions and is pulling in a further £4m from a placing and open offer to explore for oil in Colombia, are already underpinned by the group's US operations, says researchers David Williamson Associates. The company has two Colombian prospects and any drilling success would lift the shares but DWA says there is room for steady improvement on the back of the US operations. Emerald is 2.5p.

Highams, a supplier of IT products, is on its way to AIM. Teather & Greenwood is the adviser and broker.

Cybertec gained 4p to 13p on offer. The multi-media group has clinched a distribution alliance with Anglo Corporation which has an option to take a 10 per cent stake.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, including exceptional items. Other details: * Ex rights & £10 dividend & Ex at 1 Unlisted Securities Market & Suspended (p) Parity Paid per 100 Paid Shares & AM Stock Source: FT Information

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Call cost 20p per minute (daytime), 40p per minute at all other times. Call charges include

Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume
Shell	350000	British Steel	120000	British Gas	80000
Unilever	120000	BT	120000	British Airways	80000
Glaxo	120000	BT	120000	British Airways	80000
BT	120000	BT	120000	British Airways	80000
BT	120000	BT	120000	British Airways	80000

FTSE 100 index hour by hour

Open	High	Low	Close
4054.6	4054.6	4054.6	4054.6
4054.6	4054.6	4054.6	4054.6
4054.6	4054.6	4054.6	4054.6
4054.6	4054.6	4054.6	4054.6

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How Italy's transformation of economy could change the world

The real Italian story is not the lira joining the ERM, nor even the implications of this for the membership of the "Euro" club, but what is happening to Italian inflation.

The ERM story naturally begged the headlines yesterday, the more so since Britain's relationship with the single currency has been somewhat in the forefront of people's minds. The fact that there was a minor about the entry point for the lira gave a further spice to it. But in big economic terms it is not really that important an issue.

The ERM ain't what it used to be, for if you allow 15 per cent movement on either side of a central rate you have built in quite a lot of leeway.

Indeed, arguing whether that central point should be 1000 lire to the mark, or as it eventually was, 1936, really makes no sense at all.

Nor does this have great implications for the membership of the Euro club. True, prior entry to the ERM was on paper one of the essential conditions of membership. But so is a fiscal deficit of less than 3 per cent and total debt of less than 60 per cent of GDP. If these conditions are fudged, which they will have to be if France and Germany are to become members, then membership of the ERM can be fudged too. If the French and Germans want the Italians in, and Italy decides to come in, then the lira will be included. If not, then it won't.

No, the really interesting thing is what has been happening in Italy itself. Most of the months has been about the gradual return to fiscal probity. The borrowing spurge of the 1980s has left the country with a debt-to-GDP ratio of more than 120 per cent, the highest of any large developed country in the world.

The running deficit has been cut so that Italy is not running a primary surplus - i.e. taxation more than covers current spending, so were it not for

debt interest the budget would be in the black. In theory, by dint of introducing a special "Europe tax", a great way to make EMU popular, the overall budget deficit should be under 3 per cent by 1997. But nobody believes that, hence the general scepticism about Italy's finances. Most commentators rank Italy as "better, but still pretty dreadful".

That is true enough if you focus on the fiscal side. But if you look instead at the monetary data an altogether more impressive picture emerges. The graph on the left shows how the country has recovered its position of monetary virtue that it had in the early 1980s, and which it progressively abandoned until the lira's ejection from the ERM.

Most recently Italy has further underpinned this return by extending a much greater degree of independence to the Banca d'Italia, which has resisted pressure to cut interest rates too quickly despite weak growth.

The output gap - the difference between actual output and the theoretical full capacity of the economy - has therefore been widening, further reducing inflationary pressure. Result: inflation running at 2.6 per cent over the last year, a touch below the UK or for that matter the US.

Some forecasts for inflation next year put it at 2 per cent. It would be wrong to paint the



Hamish McRae

A world in which inflation is 2 per cent is a completely different one from one in which inflation is high single figures

country as a secure, low-inflation zone, for earnings growth is still running at close to 6 per cent a year, suggesting an underlying increase of at least 3 per cent in industrial costs. (UK earnings growth is running just below 4 per cent and we are right to be concerned about that.) Nevertheless it is a considerable achievement.

But it is not just an achievement for Italy. It is also a sign of a change that has taken place in the world, for the developed world as a whole has now conquered inflation.

Say that and you risk looking very silly indeed. After the searing experience of the 1970s and 1980s the markets will not be prepared to drop their guard on inflation for perhaps another generation, and rightly so. There will undoubtedly be a cyclical upturn in inflation during the next two to three years, but if the G7 country with the worst inflation record can get down to 2 per cent then that is progress indeed.

It is even possible that this 2 per cent figure is too high - in the US they reckon that quality improvements not counted in the consumer price index account for between 1 and 2 per cent of inflation: i.e. any inflation figure of below 2 per cent may mean there is no inflation at all.

This has the profoundest implications for currencies. Not so much for the new European currency union, if it indeed takes place, but rather for world currencies.

A world in which inflation is about 2 per cent, give or take a bit, is completely different from one in which inflation is high single figures, let alone double digits. Suddenly a much greater degree of currency stability becomes possible. Indeed we are almost back to the

conditions where a fixed exchange rate system becomes practicable: inflation is back to the level of the 1950s and while the Bretton Woods model could not be re-established, it should certainly become possible to inject greater "viscosity" into exchange rates.

At the moment nobody is talking about this. Nobody is thinking about the Louvre Accord of a decade ago, which set unpublished monitoring ranges for the important currencies. Nobody in Europe is thinking beyond EMU. Nobody in Japan is thinking beyond the yen. Nobody in the US is thinking much about the external value of the dollar at all.

I suspect this will change, whether or not the euro happens. If it does, then it would be useful to establish some kind of relationship - an understanding of nothing more - with the other main currencies, in particular the dollar. The "ins" will in any case have to establish a relationship with the "outs" like sterling (and maybe despite the above, the lira) how much more important it will be to establish a relationship, if it were possible, with the "outs", the dollar and the yen.

Suppose on the other hand the euro does not happen, currently an unfashionable view, but who knows? Then it will be enormously important to monitor not just European exchange rates, but also world ones so that there is no unnecessary damage to the world trading system.

To say all this is not to call for a new Bretton Woods, for that would be Utopian. In any case we don't need it, witness the way in which world trade has continued to grow as rapidly under floating rates as it did under fixed ones. Rather it is to point out that a world in which inflation has disappeared is a world where wild currency fluctuations need no longer exist - just little ones to keep people on their toes.

BBC has its work cut out to reply to Ms Mills

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



Peaved with the Beeb: The cut-out of Barbara Mills

Barbara Mills QC has a tough enough job being Director of Public Prosecutions and head of the Criminal Prosecutions Service. Last week she had to endure having a cardboard cut-out of herself featured in a *Kitty* discussion programme on the BBC.

Ms Mills, a former head of the Serious Fraud Office, had refused to participate in the studio discussion on crime, for the perfectly understandable reason that she cannot discuss single cases, only general policy.

Anyway, the programme went ahead last week and Ms Mills has written a stiff letter of complaint to John Birt, director-general of the BBC. She is not amused about being represented as a cardboard cut-out at all. The BBC is considering its reply.

On a less serious level, I suppose it could have been worse. When Roy Hattersley refused to take part in *Have I Got News For You* he was replaced by a tub of lard.

Budget day is one of the best days of the year for the spread-betting agencies, with most of the money on how long the Chancellor will speak. Sporting Index is forecasting that Ken Clarke will speak for 71-74 minutes. City Index has plummeted for 72-75 minutes, because, says spokesman Paul Austin, "we certainly expect Mr Clarke to enjoy his last Budget before the general election".

City Index is also pointing that 20 pips will go up by 12-14p, a litre of unleaded petrol by 3.5-4.5p and a bottle of Scotch by 5-7p.

Past form goes like this: last year Mr Clarke spoke for 70 minutes delivering his third Budget, his second lasted 84 minutes and his first 74 minutes. Whether this year Mr Ken will emulate Gladstone, who once banged on for over five hours, or Disraeli, who once squeezed the Budget into under an hour, remains to be seen. Or rather, heard.

Everyone remembers the

seemingly endless row between Virgin and BA over Richard Branson's accusations that BA ran a "dirty tricks" campaign against his airline.

Confirmation that everything is now sweetness and light between Mr Branson and BA chairman Sir Colin Marshall has come from an unlikely direction this week. John Pearson, managing director of Virgin Radio, has had great success with his inter-active phone service the "Orange Directory" which listeners can ring to obtain theatre tickets and the like.

Recently Virgin Radio advertised for a business partner to provide a travel service - and BA won the competition. Mr Pearson down plays the link: "All Virgin companies are run as autonomous units. We have no formal link with the [Virgin] airline".

However, it is understood that Mr Branson welcomed the BA link, saying that people will think that if BA will do business with Virgin Radio, anyone will.

Standard Life's recent annual media party at the Ivy, a media luvvie's restaurant in London, was quite a bash. Rowan Gormley, managing director of Virgin Direct, gatecrashed the party, wearing the name badge belonging to a well-known financial journalist.

John Willcock

All went well until eagle-eyed Carol Park, a person for Standard Life, realised Gormley's face didn't match his badge and interrogated him in a corner. Intense discussions followed, but when the Park realised quite who he was she decided not to throw Mr Gormley out.

Did this have anything to do with the fact that Mr Gormley's Virgin Direct just joined Autif, the unit trust establishment's trade body? Or was it just Mr Gormley's famous charm?

Direct marketing agency Evans Hunt Scott also threw a party recently, this time at the Dorchester. The 400-strong bubbly-guzzling horde were celebrating the agency's 10th anniversary, and many photos were taken of the fancily dressed revellers.

Jon Ingall, managing director of EHS, sent them all letters the next morning, telling them of "the most exciting new media launch of the year: The EHS 10th Anniversary Web Site. For those of you who came last night, the web site is a chance to relive the moments you'd forgotten - or tried to forget..."

This idea could single-handedly destroy the Office Christmas Party As We Know It.

John Willcock

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	167.27	11.9	37.34	1000	—	—	—
Canada	24.34	54.48	164.56	134.2	24.25	75.73	80.87
Germany	25.42	69.81	203.23	159.2	—	—	—
France	6.6752070-1803	6405	33423	86.81	269.258	—	—
Italy	257.84	91.43	303.22	324.4	91.47	—	—
Japan	168.38	95.81	281.27	121.50	49.47	149.17	—
ECU	13.90	21.81	66.41	126.2	14.44	44.45	—
Belgium	52.372	15.10	42.36	313.0	7.5	20.17	20.805
Denmark	9.7535	222.17	655.55	58.90	99.79	296.97	—
Netherlands	2.085	69.74	240.22	170.4	39.37	121.15	122.1
Sweden	257.84	91.43	303.22	324.4	91.47	—	—
Norway	10.70	165.90	380.270	140.3	50.25	159.89	42.338
Spain	213.73	12.21	31.48	327.78	16.20	40.48	34.088
Switzerland	1120	55.8	44.33	654.78	41.16	122.10	41.78
Australia	214.58	85.76	238.228	126.28	40.37	119.14	0.8444
South Africa	2.085	69.74	240.22	170.4	39.37	121.15	122.1
Hong Kong	2.085	69.74	240.22	170.4	39.37	121.15	122.1
Malaysia	4.2223	0.0	0.0	2.5043	27.30	80.85	—
New Zealand	234.72	64.71	155.165	140.32	54.56	97.69	0.8237
Saudi Arabia	6.2735	0.0	0.0	2.7605	1.4	5.8	2.4867
Singapore	234.39	0.0	0.0	140.3	24.19	70.65	0.9224

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
Argentina	187.30	0.9999	—	—	—	—	—
Austria	179.35	0.9999	—	—	—	—	—
Brazil	179.35	0.9999	—	—	—	—	—
Chad	5.0000	0.9999	—	—	—	—	—
Egypt	5.0000	0.9999	—	—	—	—	—
Finland	7.5588	0.9999	—	—	—	—	—
Ghana	289.49	0.9999	—	—	—	—	—
Greece	400.263	0.9999	—	—	—	—	—
India	58.752	0.9999	—	—	—	—	—
Kuwait	0.4895	0.9999	—	—	—	—	—

Forward rates quoted low to high are at a discount; subtract from spot rate and add to spot rate.
*Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals.
For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0801 123 0033.
Cable cost 35p per minute (cheapest rate) 45p other times.

Interest Rates

UK	Base	600%	Germany	Discount	250%	US	Prime	8.75%	Japan	Discount	0.50%
France	3.20%	—	Canada	4.50%	—	Discount	5.00%	—	Belgium	2.50%	—
Italy	—	—	Spain	4.75%	—	Prime	—	—	Central	3.00%	—
Netherlands	7.5%	—	Sweden	5.00%	—	Discount	—	—	Switzerland	—	—
Advances	2.50%	—	Denmark	10.50%	—	10-Day Rate	0.75%	—	Discount	1.00%	—
			ECU (Avg)	4.60%	—	Lombard	4.25%	—			

Bond Yields

Country	Yr yield %	10yr yield %	Country	Yr yield %	10yr yield %
UK	7.1%	7.27/10 7.42	Netherlands	8.14%	8.35
US	7.14%	5.92	Spain	10.0%	10.35
Japan	5.51%	1.88	Italy	9.14%	9.14%
Australia	8.14%	6.88	France	5.4%	5.4%
Germany	8.25%	4.25	Sweden	10.5%	10.5%
France	8.14%	4.25	ECU (Avg)	5.0%	5.0%

Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4
Standing CDs	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4
Local Authority Depos	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4
Treasury Bills (Days)	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4
Discount Market Rates	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4
ECU (Avg)	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4

Tourist Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	167.27	11.9	37.34	1000	—	—	—
Canada	24.34	54.48	164.56	134.2	24.25	75.73	80.87
Germany	25.42	69.81	203.23	159.2	—	—	—
France	6.6752070-1803	6405	33423	86.81	269.258	—	—
Italy	257.84	91.43	303.22	324.4	91.47	—	—
Japan	168.38	95.81	281.27	121.50	49.47	149.17	—
ECU	13.90	21.81	66.41	126.2	14.44	44.45	—
Belgium	52.372	15.10	42.36	313.0	7.5	20.17	20.805
Denmark	9.7535	222.17	655.55	58.90	99.79	296.97	—
Netherlands	2.085	69.74	240.22	170.4	39.37	121.15	122.1
Sweden	257.84	91.43	303.22	324.4	91.47	—	—
Norway	10.70	165.90	380.270	140.3	50.25	159.89	42.338
Spain	213.73	12.21	31.48	327.78	16.20	40.48	34.088
Switzerland	1120	55.8	44.33	654.78	41.16	122.10	41.78
Australia	214.58	85.76	238.228	126.28	40.37	119.14	0.8444
South Africa	2.085	69.74	240.22	170.4	39.37	121.15	122.1
Hong Kong	2.085	69.74	240.22	170.4	39.37	121.15	122.1
Malaysia	4.2223	0.0	0.0	2.5043	27.30	80.85	—
New Zealand	234.72	64.71	155.165	140.32	54.56	97.69	0.8237
Saudi Arabia	6.2735	0.0	0.0	2.7605	1.4	5.8	2.4867
Singapore	234.39	0.0	0.0	140.3	24.19	70.65	0.9224

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for day	Est/Cont'd traded	Open Interest	
Long UK	(Dec 98)	110.04	111.08	105.30	22882
Gamma Gd Bd	(Dec 98)	102.08	102.14	102.00	22004
Long US	(Dec 98)	100.09	100.10	100.00	10000
Japan Gd Bd	(Dec 98)	102.75	102.75	102.75	928
3 Mth Sterling	(Dec 98)	103.57	103.58	103.55	6935
1 Mth Eurodollar	(Dec 98)	102.79	102.79	102.79	10428
3 Mth Eurodollar	(May 97)	102.80	102.80	102.79	3554
3 Mth Eurodollar	(Dec 98)	102.80	102.80	102.79	20855
3 Mth Eurodollar	(May 97)	102.85	102.85	102.85	0
3 Mth Eurodollar	(Dec 98)	102.85	102.85	102.85	2617
3 Mth Eurodollar	(May 97)	102.93	102.93	102.93	0
3 Mth ECU	(Dec 98)	105.45	105.45	105.45	8209
3 Mth ECU	(May 97)	105.4	105.45	105.45	10
FTSE 100	(Dec 98)	4095.0	4075.0	4055.0	25592
FTSE 250	(Dec 98)	4359.0	4355.0	4350.0	520

Life FTSE Index Option

Settlement price: 4049.00

Clearing officer's price

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Atherton's chance to back spin pair

England arrive in Harare today for the first leg of their winter tour with a travelling record marginally worse than a punnet of strawberries. In fact, so perishable are they when they set off to warmer climes - they have won just one series abroad in a decade - that only a hardened optimist will be able to regard this winter as a warm-up for next summer's Ashes series.

The reality is more mundane and England will spend the next three months travelling 30,000 miles contesting the "minnowship" of world cricket. Michael Atherton's men may have beaten a disorientated India in the summer, but in tables recently compiled only their two opponents this winter, New Zealand and Zimbabwe, lie below them. A position England's main sponsor, Tetley, no doubt considered when they withdrew from the final two years of a seven-year deal.

Fortunately, Atherton and his men harbour few illusions, and his predecessor, Graham Gooch, will have warned of New Zealand's capacity to outperform their ability on paper, which was illustrated by last

As England land in Zimbabwe today, Derek Pringle assesses their opponents

week's decisive win against Pakistan in Lahore.

Zimbabwe, the first port of call, will not be much different either. Like all under-resourced countries - only 1,500 adult cricketers play the game - they are used to battling hard and digging deeper than most.

Two years ago, they had just two professional players when they beat England under lights in a one-day match in Sydney, the rest of the side being picked from an assortment of farmers, hunters and accountants. Even now, the country can only afford one contracted player.

Out of hardship, though, comes an inspiration that seems to stir when they play at home - perhaps a throwback to the times when their forebears, both black and white, had dealings with Cecil Rhodes.

Whatever it is, it transports their players beyond their normal everyday capacities. Witness the deeds of Heath Streak, who seems to be a far more potent strike bowler for Zimbabwe

when beery bellows and the whiff of barbecues come wafting up from long leg than he does for Hampshire, where the tinkling of tea cups is the norm.

Zimbabwe may have just dipped their toes into the whirlpool of international Test cricket - 20 Tests to date - and play with a novice's zeal, but they learn fast and Streak is not the only decent performer.

Having played in all their country's Tests to date, the Flower brothers are experienced batsmen; Andy the most talented. Grant the most obdurate. Like most developing sides, they bat a long way down and Paul Strang, an improving leg-spinner, recently scored a Test century at No 8. Watch out too for their first black cricketer to play in a Test, Henry Olonga, a slippery opening bowler now that he has allied consistency to a problematic action.

Slow pitches await in both countries and some imaginative captaincy may well be needed to force a result. But while batsmen should be able to seize the initiative and see whether the bowlers can finish the job off in Bulawayo and Harare, on the greener-tinged tracks in Auckland and Christchurch the onus could well be reversed.

Taking 20 wickets has long been a problem for England, and one that is likely to become more acute with Dominic Cork's withdrawal because of domestic problems. However, one man's indisposition is another man's proposition and it gives England's other pace bowlers, not least the rangy Chris Silverwood, a chance to assert themselves.

However, if Atherton was to be bold, a threshold he must be close to reaching after 35 Tests at the helm, he might consider switching the traditional focus of England's seam-based attack to spin and playing both Phil Tufnell and Robert Croft, whose emergence against Pakistan at the end of the summer impressed all who witnessed it, none more than the England captain himself.

"Croft has a strong action and he spins it hard," said Atherton before the team's departure yesterday. "He's got a



The emerging Robert Croft could spearhead England's spin attack with Phil Tufnell this winter

Photograph: PA

good attitude as well. You can always tell when someone comes on for their first over in Test cricket whether they are relishing the prospect or not. With Croft, he couldn't wait to grab the ball. Hopefully he'll form a potent partnership with Phil Tufnell, who had a good season with Middlesex and is far more settled now."

Atherton's experience of torpid Zimbabwean pitches on the England A tour six years ago means that both spinners are likely to play anyway. And as long as Alec Stewart is not pre-gangled into keeping wicket, it probably means there is room for three seamers. As none are established, it is an incentive all should want to rise to.

The batting looks strong and any side who can afford to leave Graeme Hick out on his home patch must be a confident one. Yet if the Ashes and Shane Warne are in the back of the mind, England ought to consider sending Nick Knight back to open the innings with Stewart, who after a storming summer has firmly re-established his credentials.

If countenanced, it would mean a better spread of left-handers - currently at four, six and seven - while allowing Atherton, John Crawley and Nasser Hussain, with their superior skills against spin, to combat Warne in the middle order. Just one of several tough decisions that will have to be

made by the selection committee on tour if England are to forge a settled side with a cohesive battle plan in time for the Ashes.

That said, England, with two months' rest behind them, really ought to win both the Test and one-day series in both destinations, providing a partner-free winter doesn't become too boring. To counter that, a trip to see the awesome majesty of the Victoria Falls should be made compulsory, if only to put a cricketer's lot into perspective.

Beyond that, much will depend on the weather and having missed the glorious lilac cascades of jacaranda blossom that herald if the team have arrived right in the middle of the wet season.

Like much of Africa, this is a bit of a hit or miss affair here and droughts are not unknown. Nevertheless, what Atherton must try his best to engineer is that England hit and the rains miss. As captain of England, at least one of those should be within his powers.

Tian Lamb, the Test and County Cricket Board's chief executive, and Sir Ian MacLaurin, the TCCB's new chairman, are to visit each of the 18 first-class counties over the next four months. A TCCB meeting next month will discuss a recommendation that counties receive substantial compensation on a daily rate for England players rested from a domestic fixture.

Webb becomes \$1m woman

Golf

The Australian Karrie Webb capped her first season on the LPGA Tour by becoming the first woman golfer to earn more than \$1m (£600,000) in a year when she won the LPGA Tour Championship in Las Vegas on Sunday.

Webb's fourth victory of the year was worth \$150,000, boosting her 1996 earnings to a record \$1,004,000. She pipped Britain's Laura Davies by more than \$75,000 to become the first rookie to win the LPGA money title since Nancy Lopez in 1978.

The 21-year-old fired a seven-under-par 65 for a four-round 16-under total of 272 at the Desert Inn Golf Course and a four-shot victory. "At the start of the week, winning \$1 million was the farthest [thought] from my mind," Webb said. "My goal at the start was to win." But she added: "No rookie on the men's tour has ever earned \$1 million in a season."

Webb was in the top 10 in almost every statistical category and led the Tour with 15 top-10 finishes in 25 events. Four wined her with Davies and Dottie Pepper for the LPGA lead.

Davies shot a 67 and settled for a fifth-place tie with Juli Inkster and Brandie Burton at 277, 11 under par. Davies had already been named the LPGA Player of the Year. "The money title was the whole year, more important than Player of the Year and Vare Trophy," Davies said. "The world No 1, Greg Norman, is to take a three-month break from golf because of a back problem. Norman, who won his fifth Australian Open title on Sunday, will stop playing after appearing in his own tournament, the Greg Norman Classic, starting in Melbourne on Thursday."

Double from Cowley helps Hampstead

Hockey

BILL COLWILL

Hampstead and Westminster and Anchorians remain neck and neck at the top of the Nastro Azzurro South Premier as the two clubs battle to reclaim their National League places. Mark Cowley brought his season's total to 16 with two goals in Hampstead's 6-1 win at Tunbridge Wells.

Two goals from Andy Simmons and one from Neil Archer gave Anchorians the points in their 3-0 win at Wokingham, while Ramgarhia won 5-4 in a thrilling game against Beckenham to take them into fourth. Cambridge City enjoyed a 5-2 win against struggling Redbridge and Ilford to keep them on maximum points, three ahead of Chelmsford in the Adams East Premier. Mark Cullen scored four in Chelmsford's 6-0 win at Cambridge University.

In the North, Norton had their game postponed, but still have a five-point lead and a game in hand over their nearest rivals, Formby, who could only manage a goalless draw away to Sheffield Bankers.

ENGLAND SQUAD AND TOUR ITINERARY

	Age	Tests	26-30 v Zimbabwe, Second Test (Harare Sports Club)
M A Atherton (Lancs)	28	62	January 1997
N Hussain (Essex)	28	12	1 v Zimbabwe, Second one-day international (Harare Sports Club)
A J Stewart (Surrey)	33	56	3 v Zimbabwe, Third one-day international (Harare Sports Club)
G P Thorpe (Surrey)	27	32	
J P Crawley (Lancs)	25	12	
N V Knight (Warwick)	26	6	
R C Irani (Essex)	25	2	
R C Russell (Glouce)	33	49	10 v NZ Academy XI (Pukekura Park, New Plymouth)
R D B Croft (Gloucester)	26	12	13-18 v NZC Selection XI (Fitzherbert Park, Palmerston North)
D Gough (Notre)	28	9	18-21 v Northern Districts (TrustBank Park, Hamilton)
C E W Silverwood (Notre)	21	0	24-28 v New Zealand, First Test (Eden Park, Auckland)
P C R Tufnell (Middle)	30	22	30-2 Feb v New Zealand A (Victoria Park, Wanganui)
A D Mullally (Leics)	27	6	February
*D G Cork (Derby)	25	18	6-10 v New Zealand, Second Test (Basin Reserve, Wellington)
Joining squad in New Zealand			14-18 v New Zealand, Third Test (Lancaster Park, Christchurch)
Tour manager: J R T Barclay			20 v New Zealand, First one-day international (day/night match) (Lancaster Park, Christchurch)
Coach: D Lloyd			23 v New Zealand, Second one-day international (Eden Park, Auckland)
Physiotherapist: W P Morton			25 v New Zealand, Third one-day international (day/night) (McLean Park, Napier)
Scorer: M N Ashton			March
			1 v New Zealand, Fourth one-day international (Eden Park, Auckland)
			4 v New Zealand, Fifth one-day international (Basin Reserve, Wellington)
			18-22 v Zimbabwe, First Test (Queen's Club, Bulawayo)

West Indies regroup for thrilling finale

TONY COZIER

reports from Brisbane
Australia 479 & 217 for 6 dec
West Indies 277 and 89 for 1

An enthralling climax was in prospect at the end of the fourth day of the opening Test yesterday. The outcome was likely to be determined by the confrontation between the leading lights, Brian Lara, the brilliant West Indian left-hander, and Shane Warne, Australia's leg-spin wizard.

Australia's declaration after tea challenged the West Indies to score 420 to win or to survive a minimum of 119 overs to save the match and, if the first option appeared unrealistic and the latter extremely difficult, they ended

the fourth day with Lara in occupation with 29 and the pitch still in prime condition. No team in the history of Test cricket has scored as many for victory but the Australians know that with Lara anything is possible.

The decision of the Australian captain, Mark Taylor, not to compel the follow-on after the dramatic West Indies collapse of the previous afternoon allowed the visitors to regroup and their four fast bowlers held the opposition in check to such an extent the declaration had to be delayed much later than planned.

Whatever the outcome, the West Indies revealed a resilience when all had seemed lost. Their collapse, when a position of comfort was transformed into crisis in the space of an hour, would have shaken

morale, but Taylor presented them with a chance and their bowlers led a spirited revival.

At the start, Australia held the cards, ahead by 210 with all wickets standing. It was a recipe for trouble for the West Indies but they came with a plan for containment. Ian Bishop was the best of their bowlers, running in freely and rarely straying off line as he had done in the first innings when he laboured to find his rhythm. He was rewarded with the wickets of Matthew Elliott, the tall new left-handed opener, Ricky Ponting and Mark Waugh and, but for a dropped catch at first slip by Lara which allowed Michael Bevan to escape a pair, would have had four. Keny Benjamin, even with a bothersome knee, plugged away for

13 overs either side of lunch and gained the return of Taylor's wicket, caught behind cutting.

It was left to Ian Healy to provide the late momentum. Following his unbeaten 161 in the first innings, the wicketkeeper made 45 from 50 balls which speeded the declaration.

The West Indies responded resolutely, keeping only the opener Robert Samuels in an extraordinary over from Warne in which he pulled a six and a four off consecutive balls, was missed on the long leg boundary by Paul Reiffel and two balls later was caught at slip by Taylor.

That let in Lara, who proceeded to whet the appetite by racing to 29 from 36 balls by the end. His battle with Warne was sure to dominate proceedings on the final day.

Fourth day: West Indies won toss

Australia - First innings 479 & 217 for 6 dec	1-121, R T Ponting 88, S R Waugh 85, C A Walsh 4-112
West Indies - First innings 277 (C L Hooper 102, S Chandrasekhar 82)	
Australia - Second innings	
Overnight 8 for 0	
M A Taylor c Bevan b Benjamin	36
M T G Elliott b Bishop	21
R Ponting c Bevan b Bishop	27
M E Waugh c Bevan b Bishop	27
M G Bevan c sub (Giffen) b Ambrose	20
R R Healy not out	45
P R Reiffel run out	13
Extras (b, lb, nb, r)	18
Total (for 5 dec, 88 overs)	217
West Indies - Second innings	
1-55 2-74 3-82 4-147 5-189 6-217	
Did not bat: S R Waugh, S K Warne, M S Vasudevan, G D McGrath	
Bowling: Ambrose 15-2-47-1; Walsh 17-1-58-0; Benjamin 15-1-52-1; Bishop 13-2-49-3; Hooper 2-0-7-0	
Total (for 1, 29 overs)	89
Test 1-54	
To bat: C L Hooper, S Chandrasekhar, J C Adams, T C O'Brien, K C G Benjamin, I R Bishop, C E W Silverwood, C A Walsh	
Bowling: McGrath 10-5-15-0; Kapugodige 5-1-15-0; Reiffel 4-0-25-0; Warne 10-4-34-1	

Holloake ensures successful start

A sparkling century from Ben Holloake ensured England's Under-19 team started their tour of Pakistan in style yesterday with a convincing 58-run one-day victory over Rawalpindi.

The promising Surrey youngster, brother of the England A captain, Adam Holloake, stroked an unbeaten 133 to take England to 273 for 3 after the tourists were invited to bat.

The home side always struggled to keep up with the required scoring rate in the face of some tidy English bowling, batting through their 45 overs for the loss of six wickets without threatening a victory charge.

Jonathan Powell, of Essex, finished with 3 for 38 off his nine

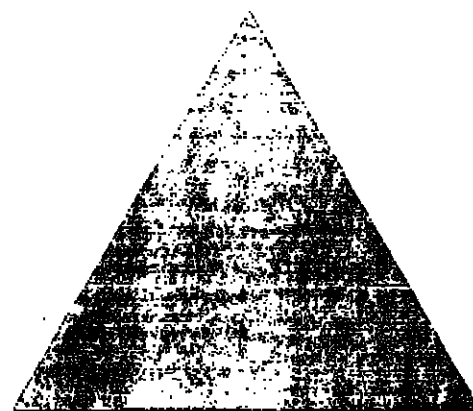
overs, while Durham's Stephen Harmison also impressed, conceding just 25 runs in his seven-over spell with the new ball as Rawalpindi finished on 215 for 6.

UNDER-19 MATCH (Rawalpindi, Pak): Rawalpindi 215 for 6; England 273 for 3 (B Holloake 133 not out). England won by 58 runs.

ENGLAND UNDER-19 PARTY AT PAKISTAN: A Plett (Lancs, capt), B Batty (Notre), D Cusker (Glouc), I Parnham (Essex), J Graham (Glouc), S Harmison (Durham), S Hales (Glouc), N Martin (Notre), Z Morris (Notre), D New (Notre), S Paine (Essex), J Powell (Essex), C Reed (Glouc), D Salter (Notre), A Tisdal (Surrey). Manager: P Hinde. Coach: J Rotherham.



Glass. Handle with care.



Glass. Handle with joy in your heart and a spring in your step.



Bass

HAND PULLED SINCE 1777. IN PINT BOTTLES SINCE 1996.

هكذا من الأصل

Forwards did not always feel the need to add an inch or so to their height and perhaps more than a pound to their weight

"When once you have thought of big men and little men," said Samuel Johnson, "it is very easy to do all the rest." The great doctor was criticising *Gulliver's Travels*. He might just as well have been talking about the England rugby team.

At the very beginning, we come to a mystery. Not only is the English pack collectively becoming taller and heavier, individual forwards seem to have been growing at an alarming rate as well.

Take, for example, Jason Leonard. When he joined the England front row six years ago, he was a modest 5ft 9in, the same height as Brian Moore (who may have been exaggerating slightly), with the tight-head prop, Jeff Probyn, at 5ft 10in. After a couple of seasons, Leonard had grown to the same

height as Probyn. There he remained comfortably until this season when, according to last Saturday's programme, he has now reached 6ft 6in and 17st 7lb.

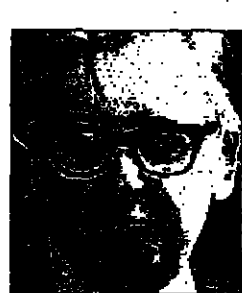
The latter is easy to believe. We most of us put on weight as we grow older. I have also heard of people who shrink slightly with age. What I have never heard of before was someone of 28, Leonard's age, who had managed to put on a whole three inches in his 28. This is clearly a case either of a medical phenomenon which deserves further investigation or of simple exaggeration.

Forwards did not always feel the need to add an inch or so to their height and perhaps more than a pound or so to their weight. That fine Welsh front row of the early

1950s, Cliff Davies, Dai Davies and John Robins, were respectively 5ft 9in, 5ft 7in, 5ft 11in, 5ft 10in, and 5ft 9in, 14st. The contemporary lock forwards Rees Stephens and Roy John were respectively 6ft 2in, 15st and 6ft 4in, 13st 7lb.

In present day rugby, Stephens would have been restricted to No 7, while John — one of the greatest line-out jumpers of the entire post-war period — would have been advised to take up basketball instead. Not only were these Welsh front five forwards smaller than their English equivalents last Saturday, they were smaller than the Italian front five as well.

Forwards may now feel a need to exaggerate their height and weight to impress the selectors. But they have grown genuinely bigger, much



ALAN WATKINS

bigger, at the same time. That, indeed, is why they add the odd inch or the extra pound. It is because they have to be big. Jack Rowell, who is himself tall, has a well known regard for big men. But we have surely reached the height of absurdity when a knowledgeable re-

porter can write, as someone did the other day, that at 6ft 3in, 16st, Chris Sheasby is "too small" to be an international No 8.

Sheasby had an outstanding game. I think he will have been done an injustice if Rowell does not retain him in the side (for I am writing this before they have been named). At 29 — he will be 30 on 30 November — his time has been long in coming.

I have always had a certain sympathy with him not do so because of his alleged smallness as because he is the kind of player who is always being accused of not doing his fair share of hard graft. The unjust assumption is that he would not be able to run about in the open if he struggled in the tight. Andy Ripley was another victim of this fallacy.

Yet another is George Graham, who would have been the Scottish tight-head prop long ago if he had not possessed the misfortune to be quick on his pins.

There are two solutions to the size problem. I disregard the third possible one, which is to organise rugby on a similar basis to boxing, in weight divisions. The first solution is simply to get hold of bigger forwards.

There is no racial or genetic reason why Italy should not be able to produce a tight-head prop. Indeed, I should have thought it easier for Italy to find big men than it is for Ireland or for my own native land. Behind the pack they already have players such as Javier Pertile, Paolo Vaccari, Diego Dominguez and Alessandro Trossello who are the equal or even the superior of most backs in the Five Nations.

The second solution is to play the game more intelligently. For instance, there is no need to have a conventional line-out on your own throw. One of the erroneous predictions about the effect of the new laws has turned out to be that the throwing side would always win their own ball. Not so. It is more profitable to circulate the line-out entirely.

Wigan, in the second half — particularly in the last quarter — of their match against Bath, showed what could be done. Bulk will, I am afraid, always beat brains. But teams such as Italy could still try to use their wits more creatively.

Yorke set to make Villa return

Football

The Aston Villa manager, Brian Little, is confident that his leading scorer, Dwight Yorke, will be over his World Cup disappointment and in the right frame of mind for the Coca-Cola Cup tie against Wimbledon at Selhurst Park tonight.

Yorke flew into Heathrow last night after being in the Trinidad and Tobago side beaten 1-0 by the United States in Port of Spain, which ended Trinidad's hopes of qualifying for France '98.

However, Little will have no hesitation in recalling the player who has scored seven goals in his last seven games. "He is obviously disappointed and he and Trinidad take their football very seriously now, but we won't have to lift him," Little said.

"He is aware of what he is coming back to at Aston Villa. He has wanted to get back for tonight's game. He has put the schedule on himself to get back in time because he wants to be involved."

"We won't have a problem in making sure he is focused on what we will be trying to do against Wimbledon. There is no question of leaving him out. If he is right, he will play. He is at the moment the best striker at this football club."

Little is likely to give Julian Joachim the role alongside Yorke after his impressive performance against Coventry on Saturday, with Savo Milosevic again likely to be on the substitute's bench.

Joe Kinnear, the Wimbledon manager, is unlikely to repeat the wholesale changes he made for the previous round against Luton, but Vinnie Jones, who was substituted with a rib injury at Liverpool on Saturday, will have a late fitness test.

Stewart Castledine, the last-minute goalkeeper against Luton, and Jon Goodman are

added to the players on duty at Anfield, when the Dons extended their unbeaten run to 15 matches.

Middlesbrough have received a boost from two of their foreign players as they prepare for their fourth-round match game against Newcastle at the Riverside Stadium tomorrow night.

Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, is confident. Fabrizio Ravanelli and Brazilian midfielder Emerson will be available for selection.

Middlesbrough are the leading scorers in the competition after beating Hereford 10-0 on aggregate and Huddersfield 5-1 in the two previous rounds.

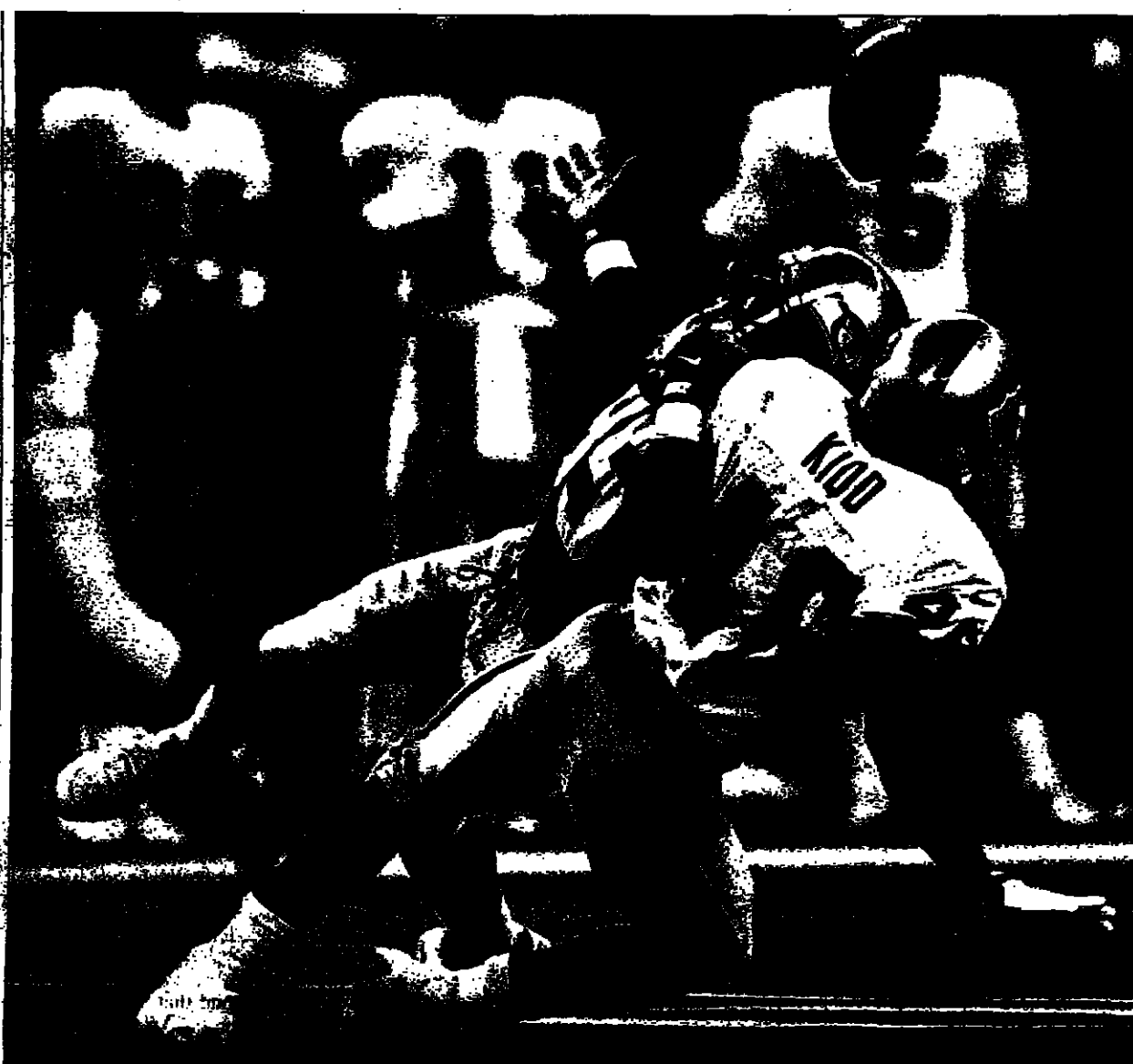
Ravanelli, with 15 goals so far this season, has recovered from a twisted ankle he incurred in the 2-2 draw with Manchester United on Saturday.

Emerson is keen to get back into action after his recent well-publicised problems off the pitch. The 24m midfielder is currently serving a three-match Premiership ban, but is eligible for the Coca-Cola Cup as the competition now has its own disciplinary rules.

The change came into effect at the beginning of the season after consultation between the Football Association, Football League and clubs when it was decided that the Coca-Cola Cup would be self-contained as far as discipline is concerned.

Players picking up two yellow cards in the competition are suspended for the next match, although Coca-Cola Cup bans can still be carried over into League and FA Cup matches if a player is subject to a three-match penalty for violent conduct.

Nigel Pearson, the Middlesbrough captain, is set to miss the Newcastle game. The 33-year-old central defender has not fully recovered from a neck injury he suffered against Wimbledon four weeks ago.



The Seattle Seahawks wide receiver Mark Pritchard fails to connect with a pass as his is filled by Oakland's defensive back Carl Kidd in Seattle. The Raiders won 27-21. Photograph: Elaine Thompson/AP

Elway's feat adds to his legend

American football

The Denver wide receiver, Ed McCaffrey, snatched the ball out of the air and fell into the end zone for the winning score, capping an 84-yard drive.

It was the 34th time Elway has rallied the Broncos from a fourth-quarter deficit. Elway had his fourth 300-yard game of the season and 32nd of his career.

In New Jersey, the New York Giants beat the Cowboys 20-6, capitalising on five Dallas turnovers. Tootie Wooten ran back 54 yards for a touchdown in a 13-point second quarter after a Michael Irvin catch and

fumble. Cowboys' Deion Sanders and full-back Darryl Johnston also had costly fumbles after pass receptions.

At Arizona, Boomer Esiason's third touchdown pass of the period, a 24-yarder to Marcus Dowell with 14 seconds left, capped a frenetic fourth quarter and gave the Cardinals a 36-30 win over the Philadelphia Eagles. The teams combined for 37 points in the fourth period, including 24 in the last three minutes.

The Eagles and Cowboys, both 7-5, missed a chance to gain ground in the NFC East as

Washington lost to the San Francisco 49ers (9-3) in overtime, Jeff Wilkins' fourth field goal setting the game.

At New England, Drew Bledsoe threw for two touchdowns in the first half and Curtis Martin ran for 141 yards as the Patriots beat the Indianapolis Colts 27-13.

In Buffalo, Jim Kelly threw for 176 yards and three scores in the first half before leaving with a hamstring injury and Steve Tasker had a pair of touchdown catches as the Bills routed the New York Jets 35-10.

Clark missed that game because of a dead leg, but now that he has recovered, the Richmond

English clubs optimistic of RFU hearing

Rugby Union
DAVID LLEWELLYN

The chances of seasonal good-will abounding between Twickenham and England's leading clubs looks a little less remote. The English Professional Rugby Union Clubs are hoping to be allowed to present their proposals to the full committee of the Rugby Football Union on Friday.

One source close to the protracted negotiations said yesterday that both sides were "very close to agreement", but that is one of a number of clichés coined during the dispute and in reality means very little.

As it is, there are rumours that elements within the RFU are trying to prevent the two sides meeting on Friday. But Epruc are optimistic of a hearing and will be having a preliminary chat with the RFU tomorrow to outline their policies before Friday's get-together.

Plans to hold a meeting of leading clubs — organised independently of Epruc — have been abandoned. Prime movers were clubs from the North, who are unhappy with Epruc's stand against the RFU. Precisely what the meeting would have concerned was unclear.

There have, however, been mutterings from the North about calling an SGM to sort out the mess, although if the two sides are as close as is claimed, a third SGM would likely as not divide rather than unite the game.

Thankfully, it was business as usual on the field. Jack Rowell announced a 24-man squad to prepare for the match against the New Zealand Barbarians at Twickenham on Saturday. Rowell, expected to name an unchanged team today, has added Ben Clarke, Victor Ubogu and Matt Dawson to the 21 brought together for the Italy match.

Clarke missed that game because of a dead leg, but now that he has recovered, the Richmond

No 8 is expected to be on the bench for the New Zealand match. Ubogu has been called up as cover for the pack leader Jason Leonard, who injured an elbow against the Italians. Dawson is covering for the scrum-half Andy Gomarsall, who limped off towards the end of England's efficient Italian job.

The Pilkington Cup draw favoured leading clubs with the holders, Bath, the beaten finalists, Leicester, and the Courage League leaders, Harlequins, getting home ties for the fifth round on 21 December. Bath, who have won the competition 10 times, entertain London Irish in the only all-First Division clash, while Quins have a more straightforward tie against Cheltenham, of League Four South. Whether Leicester play Leyland or Newbury — their postponed fourth-round tie is expected to take place on 8 December — they should have few problems.

It does not look such a formality for three other First Division sides. Sale have been drawn at home to Richmond, who lead the Second Division. "It gives us a good chance to see where we are in comparison with the top clubs," John Kingston, their director of rugby, said yesterday. "A lot has been written about the standard of rugby in the Second Division, this tie should give everyone an interesting insight into that."

The First Division strugglers West Hartlepool have an equally awkward visit to Richmond's rivals, Newcastle. Form favours Rob Andrew's Second Division side. Bottom-placed Orell take on the Second Division high-flyers Bedford. Spare a thought for Wigton of North One, who have to travel from Cumbria to Birmingham where they take on Moseley, of the Second Division. Fellow North One club Widnes have to beat Reading, of the Third, in a rearranged fourth-round tie in order to gain a home game against Saracens.

Final victory is stress relief for tired Graf

Tennis

Steffi Graf emerged from the end-of-season Chase Championship in New York as the undisputed champion of women's tennis with a five-set victory over Martina Hingis in the final.

"In a way, I'm glad it's done," Graf said after her 6-3, 4-6, 6-0, 4-6, 6-0 victory over Hingis for a fifth Tour final championship title. "In another way, in terms of what I've done in tennis this year, I think I topped last year. It was so much more difficult physically to do it."

"If I had a wish list for next year, it would be my health. That's something that I'm deeply disturbed by. I really need to find a way to feel better physically. That's absolutely the top priority. Second is that life in general gets a little easier."

Peterborough veto skating on thin ice

Ice hockey

Haringey's match against Peterborough Islanders was abandoned after the first period on Sunday when the referee ruled that parts of the ice were too thin for play to continue, writes Jon Brodwin.

Both sets of players had agreed that the English League Southern Conference game should go ahead after inspecting the Alexandra Palace rink before the face-off.

Peterborough complained to officials, however, after one of their players sustained a groin injury on an uneven section of the ice when they were trailing 4-1. Players protested that they could feel concrete under their skates.

The rink was being played on for the first time since it was used as a dressing-room for the MTV Europe Music Awards two weeks ago.

The Haringey manager, Dave Loudfoot, said: "The ice was relayed last Sunday and all of my players were happy to continue. I have seen matches played on ice much worse than that."

He added that he would appeal to the English Ice Hockey Association to award his side the victory, and would agree to a rematch only if the game restarted from the second period with Haringey's lead intact and identical teams.

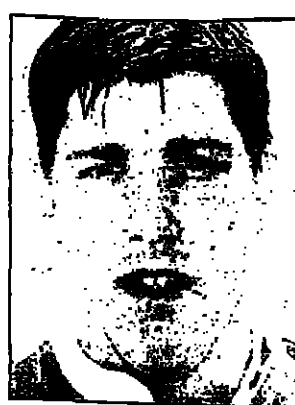
American football				
NFL: Baltimore 25, Jacksonville 26; Buffalo 35, NY Jets 12; Chicago 24, Detroit 14; Cincinnati 24, Houston 10; Cleveland 13, Kansas City 10; Dallas 24, San Francisco 10; Denver 27, Minnesota 27; Green Bay 21, New England 27; Indianapolis 13, Tampa Bay 23; New Orleans 21, Washington 19; Oakland 20, Seattle 24; St. Louis 20, NY Giants 20; Tampa Bay 24, Carolina 22; St. Louis 9, LA Raiders 24.				
AMERICAN CONFERENCE				
Eastern Division	W	L	PF	PA
New England	4	0	267	202
Indianapolis	3	1	251	232
Atlanta	6	0	265	202
NY Jets	1	4	211	333
CENTRAL DIVISION				
Pittsburgh	3	2	258	183
Cincinnati	3	2	258	183
Cleveland	2	3	246	208
Detroit	2	3	234	208
Baltimore	3	0	281	192
WESTERN DIVISION				
Denver	3	0	317	192
San Francisco	1	4	204	278
San Diego	1	4	274	208
LA Raiders	1	4	250	278
Seattle	6	0	243	263
NATIONAL CONFERENCE				
Eastern Division	W	L	PF	PA
Washington	7	0	283	231
Philadelphia	7	0	283	191
Carolina	6	1	283	231
NY Giants	1	5	231	281
NY Jets	1	5	200	228
CENTRAL DIVISION				
Green Bay	3	2	318	174
Chicago	3	2	302	228
Minnesota	3	2	286	208
Dallas	3	2	286	208
St. Louis	3	2	286	208
San Francisco	3	2	286	208
San Diego	3	2	286	208
LA Raiders	3	2	286	208
Seattle	3	2	286	208
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Travelling in hope
Derek Pringle looks at England's
cricketing options on tour, page 26

sport

Bigger is not better
Alan Watkins on rugby's
sizeable dilemma, page 27

Test reveals Charlton youth's 'drug cocktail'



Notley: First-year professional with Charlton Athletic

Football

CATHERINE RILEY

Football is again having to come to terms with the problem of recreational drug use after Jay Notley, of Charlton Athletic, tested positive for a cocktail of drugs, including cocaine, cannabis and Ecstasy.

The 18-year-old midfielder player has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association and suspended immediately pending his appearance before a disciplinary commission.

Notley, a first-year professional, is the first player to provide a positive sample in around 300 tests conducted already this season, a sign that the authorities are winning the war against drugs.

However, the results of the doping control unit's visit to the London club's training ground on 4 November, two days after he returned from a month on loan with the Icis Premier League club Dagenham and Redbridge will have serious results for the youngster.

Both Ecstasy and cocaine are Class A substances and the latter is regarded as a performance enhancer. The last player caught taking cocaine, Roger Stanislaus of Leyton Orient, was banned from football for a year and sacked by his club.

Notley is the third Charlton player caught by the random tests. Teenagers Dean Chandler and Lee Bowyer, who is now an England Under-21 player with Leeds, were given counselling when they were among the first detected, although their offence was cannabis use.

A fourth Charlton player, Craig Sloan, has confessed in the tabloid press on several occasions to drug use, but was never charged by the FA.

Alan Curbishley, the Charlton manager, said yesterday: "We are very disappointed. No other football club has worked as hard as we have. After the Lee Bowyer situation we have worked very closely with the FA and the police."

"We have had drug awareness talks here for everyone and we have been doing in-house drug testing. The players at this football club know they are going to be tested. If someone is going to take drugs after all the information we have given

out, they only have themselves to blame. I knew about this three weeks ago. The player has now got to put his mind on rehabilitation."

"We have been very successful with our youngsters and this comes as a blow for us. Other football clubs have got the same problem. It is perhaps no coincidence the players caught here are all 17-year-old players. Perhaps it is a sign of the times."

"I have not featured in the first team and barely played for the reserves here. He has lost his way on the field, as well as off it. Perhaps that is connected. I don't know. It is going to be a tough couple of months for him."

"I hope and wish that he does the rehab and comes out of it successfully. The stuff he has been taking is not conducive to healthy living and I hope he sorts himself out. Essentially, if people want to take drugs, though, they can do. What can you do to stop them?"

An FA spokesman, Steve Double, said: "It is the first time we have come across a cocktail of drugs like this, so it is obviously a serious matter." However, he insisted football was

winning the fight to clean up the game. "Two seasons ago, there were 12 positive results from 272 tests. Last season, there were seven from the same number of tests."

"This season we have stepped up our testing to around 500 and this is the first positive result from around 300 already carried out, which is encouraging. But we cannot afford to be complacent."

"Our aim is to focus on the professionals and in particular the younger players, who are the most likely to be at risk from drugs."

Major backs World Cup bid

The Prime Minister, John Major, has told the Football Association he would "strongly support" an FA attempt to bring the World Cup to England in 2006.

An FA delegation including the England coach, Glenn Hoddie, went to Downing Street yesterday for an hour-long meeting with Major to discuss the possibility of Government backing.

The FA will be holding further detailed talks with the Government within the next two weeks while a measure of the Prime Minister's support would be the staging of a special Downing Street reception ahead of next February's World Cup qualifier against Italy.

The FA chief executive, Graham Kelly, and Hoddie were accompanied at the meeting by Keith Wiseman, the FA chairman, and the director of public affairs, David Davies, while Major was joined inside Downing Street by the Sports Minister, Iain Sproule.

"The Prime Minister has indicated that he is very keen and will strongly support the bid in principle," Kelly said. "A meeting will be held between the FA and the Government within the next two weeks to talk more about the details."

The FA decided to launch a bid to bring the game's showpiece occasion back after a 40-year absence following the success of Euro 96.

The FA is unlikely to have a free run, with Germany having already stated their intention to bid to host the competition, last staged in that country in 1974. Africa, yet to host the World Cup, will also make a strong bid with South Africa the front-runners.

Liverpool are giving a trial to Rosenborg's 24-year-old Norwegian international full-back Bjorn Tore Kvarme.

Ipswich yesterday signed the Tottenham defender Jason Cundy in a £200,000 deal. The deal is an initial £200,000 down payment but with a further £50,000 coming after 30 games and an extra £50,000 if Ipswich win promotion this season.

Leicester's 18-year-old striker, Emile Heskey, has turned his back on a move to one of the Premiership clubs by signing a new deal which will keep him at Filbert Street until June 1999.

Dennis Bergkamp, Arsenal's Dutch international, has indicated he wants to commit the rest of his career to Arsenal and play out the "most important years of my career" at Highbury.

More football, page 27



Dominic Buckley and Neil Ewing tackle the Penmachno North section of the Network Q RAC Rally yesterday. The Subaru pair finished seventh

Photograph: David Ashdown

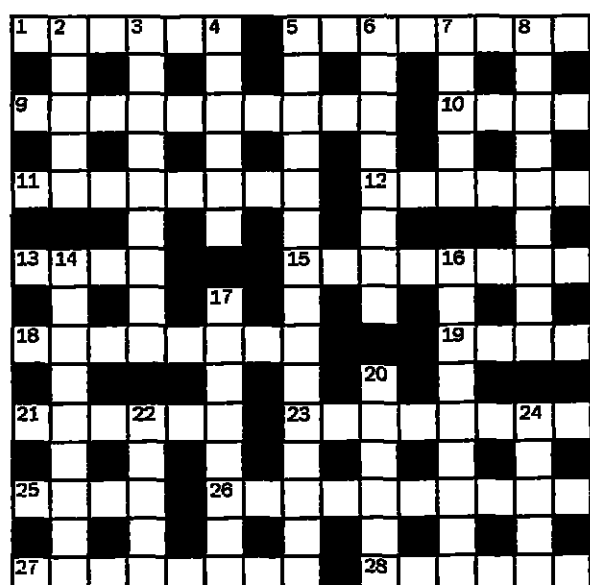
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3154, Tuesday 26 November

By Aedra

Monday's Solution



DOWN
1. A fellow unable to walk has got fired (6)
2. Where cattle are quick going in and late coming out? (8)
3. Building regulations require this rather wet set of instructions (4,6)
4. Advanced to intelligence given a delay (4)
5. A number of notes for Margaret in cashing a giro (8)
6. Whatever happens certainly includes New York & Washington (6)
7. Some thing lifted fruit (4)
8. Old PR deceit is pathetic (8)
9. Outlook for half the viewers (8)

ACROSS
10. Bird never flies without displaying velocity (4)
11. On reflection I dispose of a weasel animal (6)
12. Possibly appearing in a court he'll get community service? (8)
13. Power's given to hostile disagreeable person (4)
14. Swine with much in place returned a bit throaty (10)
15. One male, modelling, is dignified (8)
16. Foreign sailing animal (6)

DOWN
17. Just limiting learners ability (5)
18. Perhaps kind of orders for desserts? (5,4)
19. Less than often ought to be sufficient (6)
20. State in exposure needs temperature and humidity control (3,12)
21. Suspension of a governor - missing cane (8)
22. Sort of owl succeeded in losing nothing in river (5)
23. Sincere flattery? (9)
24. Meter in plant indicates semiconductor (9)
25. Basic thing found in table, aluminium (9)
26. Tease European twice, nastily, getting complaint (8)
27. Nurse keeps much back that's dishonestly acquired (6)
28. One's getting good facilities in a place to live (5)
29. Tea's drunk in Eastern country (5)

Brundle blunders in Schwarz's race

Rallying

DERICK ALLSOP
reports from Chester

Martin Brundle's great adventure in the forests was consigned to a ditch yesterday, but not before he had been hooked on the drug that is the Network Q RAC Rally and he vowed he would be back to complete the mission.

As Germany's Armin Schwarz was coasting to consummate victory and Mark Higgins was carrying the British standard with a creditable fourth place, the Formula One veteran was coming to grief as so many before him had done. Brundle, whose excellent showing on Sunday was scarcely reflected by an overnight position of 73rd, resumed the charge in Wales yesterday morning. Twenty-five minutes into the stage he had overtaken five cars, which had left ahead of him at one minute intervals, and went wide to negotiate a sixth. Too wide.

The Ford Escort RS Cosworth plunged into the ditch. Brundle, remembering instructions from the rallying fraternity, "booted it", hoping to force his way out. Instead, the car thumped into a bank. The impact smashed in the front and caused a fire. Brundle and his navigator, Roger Freeman, clambered to safety as marshals quickly dealt with the blaze.

For Brundle it was a salutary lesson at the end of a concentrated course on rallying. After his ordeal on Saturday, he had found a renewed relish. "The car was going beautifully," he

said. "Driving fast is no problem. The problem is you've got so little margin for error. I came up behind the sixth car and was unsighted. We slid into the ditch and then came to a sudden stop from about 50mph. There was a small turbo fire but it was no real drama."

"I've been taking off minutes from everyone. I could have cruised round and been the first grand prix driver to finish the RAC, but I wasn't interested in that. Not that I was going silly."

Brundle acknowledged his rally had been prolonged thanks to the assistance of Louise Aitken-Walker. "I found the camaraderie slightly strange," he admitted. "Everyone wants to

help. I didn't expect that. I now realise in these elements you have to help each other."

"I didn't enjoy Saturday. I was out of my depth. It was too big a challenge to start with, but I wouldn't have missed it for the world. I don't want to leave it like that. I've got to do it again."

Brundle's performance made Freeman revise his opinion of Formula One drivers, commonly perceived in this area of motorsport as jumped up and pampered. Freeman said: "It's a shame it ended like that. We stopped in the distance it took to crumple the car. But he's a great driver, his car control is superb. It was easy to overlook his inexperience, and that is

probably what caught him out. He could be world class, right up there with the McRaes. He's changed my attitude towards grand prix drivers. We're supposed to be the tough ones, out there in the forests, but we're no tougher than they are. If you can drive a Formula One car, you can drive a rally car."

Brundle cannot be sure he is still a Formula One driver, but he is optimistic of negotiating a deal to stay with Jordan-Peugeot next season. He left saying: "Now I've got to get a job. I'm hopeful we can sort things."

Schwarz had business pretty well sorted from the first stage and his Toyota Celica rolled into the racecourse here yesterday

7min 52sec ahead of Japan's Masao Kamikita, in a Subaru Impreza, the biggest winning margin in the rally for 13 years. The German said: "It's great to end the season this way. Even after everything the weather threw at us in the first two days, the last leg in Wales was no easier. I could afford to back off a little but I didn't want to get too far away from my normal rhythm. That's when you increase the chance of going off. Our only scare came when the power steering went and we lost 40sec in penalties changing the steering rack."

The winner in 1983, Sweden's Stig Blomqvist, was third this time, giving Skoda a Formula Two victory to celebrate the RAC silver jubilee and turn a those old jokes on a few more renowned manufacturers.

Britain's leading driver overnight, Jeremy Eccles, ran into problems, slipping down 15th and presenting the nation's distinction to Higgins, at the wheel of a Nissan Sunny. The 25-year-old Isle of Man-born rally instructor, said: "Brilliant, quite brilliant. We had to attack and just went for it. I couldn't have gone any quicker."

Wales' Gwynndaf Evans, who crashed spectacularly on Sunday, was released from hospital yesterday, declaring himself stiff but otherwise unharmed.

NETWORK Q RAC RALLY Leaders (after overall standings): 1. A Schwarz (Ger) Ford Escort 4hr 46min 50sec; 2. M Kamikita (Japan) Subaru 4hr 54min 42sec; 3. S Blomqvist (Swe) Skoda 5hr 02min 02sec; 4. M Higgins (GB) Nissan Sunny 5hr 09min 11sec; 5. G D Evans (Ile) Ford Escort 5hr 12min 02sec; 6. J Eccles (GB) Ford Escort 5hr 13min 02sec; 7. D Buckley (GB) Subaru 5hr 16min 04sec; 8. H Rowenova (Fin) Subaru 5hr 22min 40sec; 9. E Weber (Ger) Seat 5hr 22min 24sec; 10. R Baumgartner (Austria) Volkswagen 5hr 23min 25sec.



The turbo in Martin Brundle's car catches fire in Chester yesterday

Photograph: Emrys



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